# Glad Tidings

January/February 2014

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Glad Tidings

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# President's Message

There is a hymn by Brian Wren that I invite you to 'live' in this new year of 2014. It begins, "This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember, and move on." (Brian Wren, 1978) Remember…and move on. Isn't that our new 'theme song?'

It continues, "Love's mighty Spirit, now as then, can make for us a world of difference as faith and hope are born again." When faith and hope are added we are challenged with the Spirit's daring to step from the past and with certitude to seek new paths. The hymn concludes: "This is a day of new beginnings; our God is making all things new."

This hymn speaks to me. For one hundred years, the Women's Missionary Society has been 'doing mission' including raising funds for work in Canada and in other countries. We sponsored women 'good news' missionaries who went out to serve in many countries. In recent years, we have made it possible for WMS women to visit our mission fields and learn first-hand what is being done and what is still needed. WMS groups have encouraged children and adults to study and learn about our mission partners. In Canada, our deaconesses and other caring women have faithfully visited homes for the elderly and hospitals. We can recall our past with pride—no doubt about it!

Now is the time for new beginnings! Now is the time to do a new thing!

Even with shrinking numbers in our groups and our congregations, we must accept the fact that we have not finished the work that our ancestors began. In fact, we have barely started. It is time to shake off the old routines that turn off the younger generations and move with energy and spirit to reach out to those in and out of our buildings. We must offer ways of 'doing mission' to which they can relate: perhaps short time projects, business-free gatherings, hands-on events, and I encourage you to add your own ideas here.

I know some are tired and some prefer 'our' groups and 'our' ways of doing things. By all means, carry on. The fellowship you share is a gift worth saving. I also know that some have the energy and the will to tackle the new beginnings. With daring and trust that God is with us, we can continue to do new things.

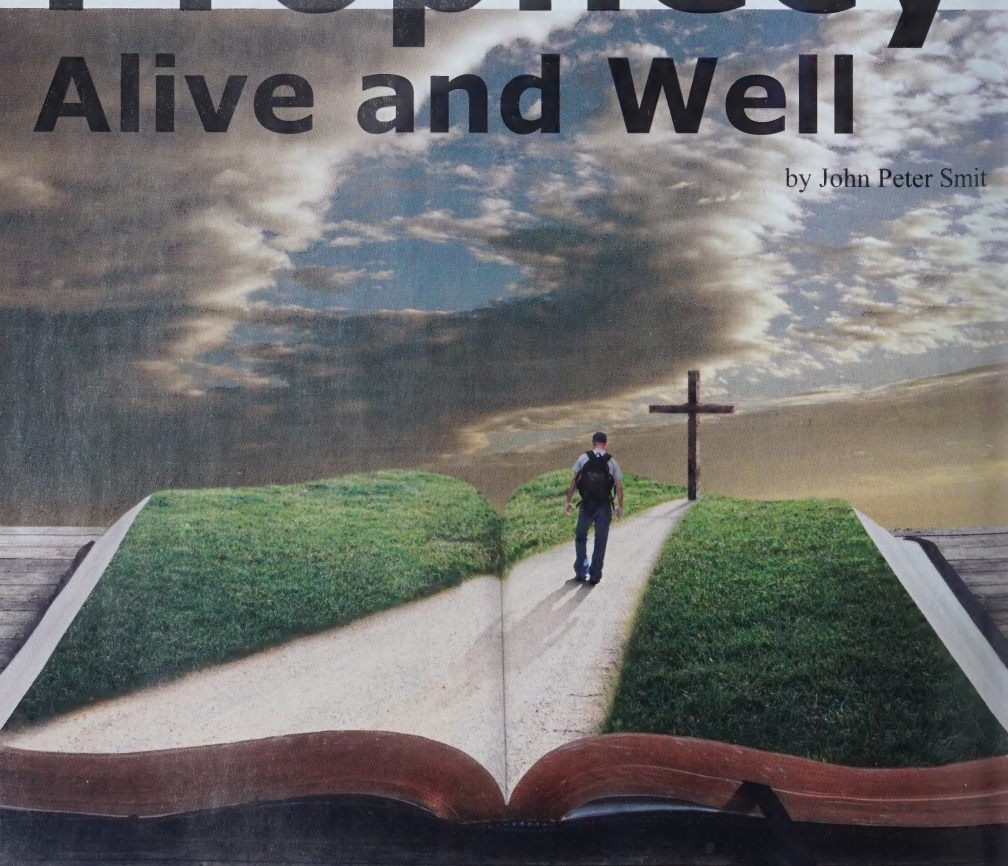
***"Christ is alive, and goes before us to show and share what love can do." (Wren)***

# Prophecy Alive and Well

by John Peter Smit

Recently, at a workshop I was conducting, I was introduced as someone who spoke with "a prophetic voice." This comment took me aback, as I have never considered myself a prophet. It did, however, get me thinking about prophecy and whether there are still prophets in our midst.

A number of years ago, Geoff Westlake, a pastor in the USA, wrote an article entitled, "Where are the APE's?" Using the five-fold model of ministry found in Ephesians 4:11, "The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and



teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ," (NRSV) he wonders why it is that we have so many pastors and teachers and so few apostles, prophets, and evangelists (APE's). There are many reasons for all of these, but one that I believe applies particularly to prophets is that we are not clear about the role of prophets (and prophecy) in our current church and our current age. In fact, we are more likely to think of a prophet as an object of derision: someone on the street corner with a sign. However, I believe that we need to consider if there are still prophets in our midst today.

As we consider prophets and prophecy, I would like to base my observations on a simple but important truth that, for the most part, prophets speak about the present, not the future. As we read the scriptures, while there are familiar accounts of future victory and salvation, most prophecy is firmly rooted in the present. It is individuals telling others that if they keep doing what they are doing, bad things will happen. So, for instance, if my doctor tells me that I will have health issues if I don't exercise (which he does), he is not predicting the future, he is pointing out future consequences of current behaviour. If we read the words of the prophet Hosea, "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings," (Hosea 6:6 NRSV) we see that Hosea is not predicting the future. He is simply pointing out that current behaviour (sacrifice rather than love) will bring judgement, or conversely, that changed behaviour (love not sacrifice) will bring blessings.

However, prophecy is more than just the ability to see future consequences from present behaviour. Prophecy is also one of the spiritual gifts that God has given to some Christians for the use of the church. Christian Schwarz in his book, 3 Colors of Ministry, describes prophets as people who are "the vehicle of a divine message regarding a concrete situation." This has been my experience of prophets in the church today. Let me give you two examples.

Years ago, I knew someone who was on a search committee. As the committee was nearing the decision making moment, another member of the committee blurted out, "I do not believe that this is the person God has in mind for this church." Her outburst was ignored, the person was called, and the congregation endured at least a decade, probably two, of needless pain and aimlessness. Secondly, in a church I served, the session made a hasty policy decision concerning the use of alcohol on church premises; again, a prophetic voice was ignored. Fortunately the consequences were not as great. We were able to correct

*Prophecy must always be exercised in the context of love.*

course and move on, but not without cost and not without pain. Please note that these examples are not about calling ministers or serving alcohol, rather they are about the peril of ignoring a prophetic voice with a divine message for a concrete situation.

As we consider the implications of prophecy, it is worth noting a few things. The first is that in the church, sometimes, the majority does not rule. That said, all prophecy must be tested. 1 Corinthians 14:29 says, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said." (NRSV) In fact, it may be worth cultivating the gift of discernment along with the gift of prophecy.

As I consider my experience of prophets in the church, I notice that they share a number of characteristics. First of all, they are deeply faithful, deeply humble, and fully supportive of the wider ministry of the church. While there are many complainers or "sticks in the mud" who might consider themselves prophetic, in my experience this is not the case. The prophets, both women, in my stories above were deeply steeped in scripture, in prayer, and in the life and ministry of the church. Both of them had true earned authority, and yet neither of them served in any official capacity (except for the aforementioned search team). As well, they were deeply supportive of the minister and ministry and in all things sought the best for the church. Ironically, neither one of them, then or now, would consider themselves prophets. In other words, prophecy is not a strident opinion from outside the church: it is a holy word from deep within. It is a word from those who have earned the right to speak and who exercise that right as the Lord instructs them.

This is perhaps the most significant test of prophecy—is it delivered in love? 1 Corinthians 13:2 says this: "And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." (NRSV) Prophecy must always be exercised in the context of love. Even the prophets of the Old Testament called the people to change and

obedience, not because they were angry with them, but because they loved them!

I am convinced, therefore, that prophecy is alive and well in our churches and that we ignore our prophets at our peril. In fact, I would urge you to ask yourself, who are the prophets in my church? What is their word of knowledge or wisdom? And how do we respond to them? You might be surprised.

*The Rev. John-Peter Smit is the Congregational Development Consultant for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda. John-Peter is married to Tori, a Diaconal Minister, and they have two children, Jacob and Miriam.*

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[1] Geoff Westlake, "Where are the APE's?" WWWESTLAKE (blog). May 23, 2008, http://wwwestlake.wordpress.com/2008/05/23/where-are-the-apes/.

[2] Christian A. Schwarz, The 3 Colors of Ministry: A Trinitarian Approach to Identifying and Developing Your Spiritual Gifts (ChurchSmart Resources, 2001), p. 132.

## Mission Awareness Sunday

The worship resource for Mission Awareness Sunday is not mailed to WMS groups. You can get a copy of the litany, sermon, and children's story at www.wmspcc.ca/mission-awareness-sunday. A copy will also be emailed to those in our database. If you would like to receive an email, please contact amckeown@presbyterian.ca.

## April 27, 2014

Theme: Sent Out with Nothing?

Scripture Readings: Luke 9: 1–6, 10, 11
1 Corinthians 9: 19–23

Author: Shannon Bell-Wyminga

For more information contact Alexis McKeown
800-619-7301 ext. 319 or amckeown@presbyterian.ca

# PICTURE a PROPHET

## HOW DO YOU PICTURE A PROPHET?

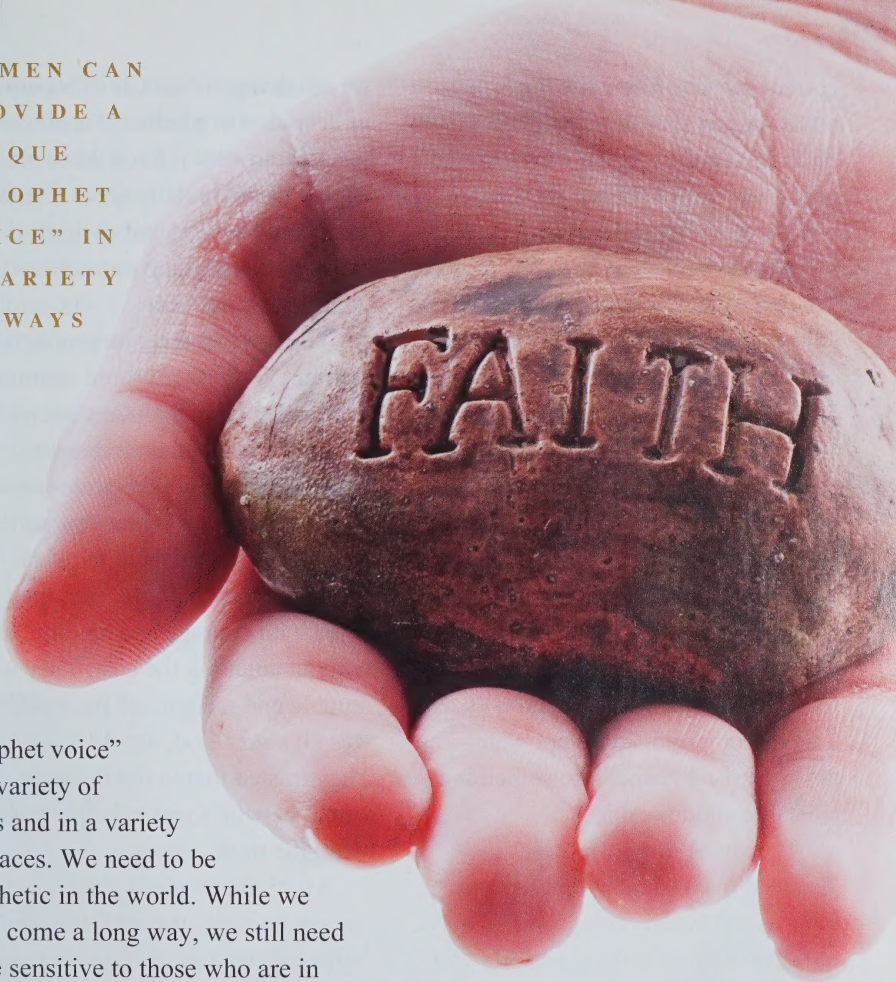
By Karen Horst

How do you picture a prophet? Are there prophets still in our midst, or did prophets end with the one who was dressed in a camel shirt and ate locusts and honey? If we agree with the definition that a prophet is one who tells God's truth, one who is a vessel chosen by God to share God's news, then any one of us can be a prophet. It is not only the larger-than-life characters like Isaiah, who walked about naked for three years, or Jonah, who spent time in the belly of a fish, but it is ordinary people like you and me who are capable—in fact, called by God—to share God's truth in a world that is desperately in need of God's love and wholeness.

Women have a very unique role to play in sharing God's truth. Many windows have opened since October 18, 1929, when women in Canada were constitutionally declared as persons. Over the many years I have worked in the church, I have seen dramatic changes in the acceptance of women in non-traditional roles. Women are now doctors, ministers, politicians, and scientists. They juggle the challenges of family and workplace with finesse. But we would be foolish to think that there is not more we need to do to call for equality and justice for all people regardless of gender, race, or age.

Women can provide a unique

WOMEN CAN PROVIDE A UNIQUE "PROPHET VOICE" IN A VARIETY OF WAYS




"prophet voice" in a variety of ways and in a variety of places. We need to be prophetic in the world. While we have come a long way, we still need to be sensitive to those who are in powerless positions. The feelings of being disregarded, marginalized, and dominated are not that far behind us. And many women today still struggle with subjugation and oppression because of economics and the place where they are born. Our work is not done as long as our world allows girls to go without education and women to be sexually exploited. We cannot rest while others are facing domination, regardless of the circumstances. We have known the pain and heartache first hand.

We can be prophetic within our own families as we seek to support the next generation with all the pressures they face—some real and some culturally imposed. In a world where mothers are considered irresponsible unless they use the

correct car seat, know the latest in nutrition, and demonstrate the best skills in negotiation, we can help the next generation navigate what is real and what is imposed.

We can be prophetic in the church. We can dare to fight for the truth of God even if it contradicts popular opinion or won't make people happy. Dare I suggest that women are still inclined to equate Christian love with being "nice?" Yet, in an effort to be loving and compassionate, we can be harmful if our love is not willing to call people to responsibility and to their best selves. So often women are inclined to take on the peacemaker's role, which is noble and helpful as long as compromises do not water down Christ's gospel into something palatable and tolerable.

We can be prophetic to self. We need to constantly evaluate our choices and who is being served in our actions. God calls us to a life of sacrifice, courage, service, and worship. If our motivation is anything other than modeling Christ and being Christ in the world, then we need to speak a prophetic word to ourselves. We need to regularly ask ourselves whether what we are doing serves Christ's purposes, or deep down, whether it is about serving ourselves. Even when we appear to sacrificially serve Christ, we may be serving our own need to be needed or serving our need to be validated or noticed.

When we look to the prophets in scripture, they share some common qualities even though they are each unique and served in divergent contexts. Although the prophets all exhibited courage when sharing the news God wanted them to reveal they were often timid. In the end, they acted with courage and determination without counting the cost. They were humble and recognized their calling was all about God, not their gift. They trusted that in the moment, God would be with them to help them share the truth in love.

All of the prophets shared a sincere humility. Many felt unworthy of the calling and some even named it, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist. Often they felt unsure of themselves, but they spoke out because they knew it was God's will for them. They put aside worrying about their own safety and well-being to honour God. Of course, it was not without cost. Some were ridiculed, mocked, and even put to death. Often, people refused to hear the message and blamed the messenger instead.

If we are to be Christ's prophets, then we must be willing to speak the truth, even when it may prove upsetting to people. It can mean being ostracized by the people who matter to us. It can mean outright rejection, but ultimately it is not about pleasing people. It is about being faithful to God.

No wonder we are reluctant to recognize contemporary prophets and even more so, to believe that God will speak through us!

Do you believe that you are a prophet of God? Anyone who speaks God's truth is!

*The Rev. Karen Horst has been active within the denomination for many years, serving as a Regional Educational Consultant, writing curriculum and study-guides, and leading countless courses and workshops. Presently, she is minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Orillia.*

DO YOU BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE A PROPHET OF GOD? ANYONE WHO SPEAKS GOD'S TRUTH IS!

*What does it mean to be creative, gentle, and a prophet in today's world?*

# Creative, Gentle Prophet

## A Holy Paradox

by Tobey Boyer

What does it mean to be creative, gentle, and a prophet in today's world?

Many of the prophetic books of the Bible begin with, "The word of the Lord has come to (insert prophet's name)." How does the word of God come? What does it mean to listen for God? Is it the urge of conscience, knowing something is not right in the world? Or maybe it is recognizing what is not of God and revealing the new reality of what God is doing in the world today. Can the word of God come to me? Could I insert my name?

I've always thought of the biblical prophets as living in strange lands, ranting and raving about repentance, and threatening the wrath of God. Maybe these messengers of God weren't really in strange lands, but just strange themselves. Despite my initial (and probably inaccurate) impressions of the prophets, I find myself drawn to them, especially in this time of my life. In the last six months, I have gone from one strange land to another. I graduated from theological college, an institution with its own set of rules and expectations to another with a vastly different set of rules and expectations, and began serving my first pastoral charge of two congregations, another institution with a vastly different set of rules and expectations.

As a seminary student, I explored the pastoral identity of the prophet. I was drawn to the ancient prophets' tasks of moving God's people from apathy to transformation. I saw apathy, apathy as indifference to

God, as indifference to injustice, as indifference to life, and as a dangerous reality for people of faith today. I studied the role that a prophet could play in the church. The key word in that sentence is "studied." I read the wise words of theologians, listened intently to my professors, and wrote carefully worded papers. I proved the need for prophets in our world and in our churches. But my question became, what does that look like in the real world? If I truly believed that God's mission in the world could be realized when the body of Christ moved out from apathy to action, then I needed to move from the theoretical to the practical, from the academic to the applied, from one strange land to another. I needed to reconsider the biblical model of prophet and consider the possibility of a creative, gentle prophet.

Creativity is one of the hallmarks of a prophet. The images and metaphors found in the proclamations and warnings of the ancient prophets prove their creative spirit. In the book of Hosea, the prophet's relationship with his unfaithful wife is a metaphor for the Israelites' unfaithfulness to God. The prophet Zephaniah describes in terrifying detail the wrath of destruction coming to the land of Judah. Only one with a gift for creativity can speak with simple poetic clarity as Micah does when he says, "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

A prophet is patient. A prophet is hospitable. A prophet is gentle. These are not words usually associated with prophets. Many prophets of the Old Testament were harsh and ornery. The prophet Amos called rich women cows. A bear attacked a group of youth when cursed by the prophet Elisha. And Jonah? Even after his adventure in the big fish, the prophet Jonah was disappointed by God's mercy. Prophets were not often portrayed as the kind of friend you wanted to invite for coffee or take on a walk in the park. So, while creativity was the hallmark of a prophet, it can be agreed that gentleness was not.

However, today's prophets need both traits for the word of the Lord to be heard. Why must a prophet be creative and gentle? The answer lies in the nature of the church in 2014.

*I needed to reconsider the biblical model of prophet and consider the possibility of a creative, gentle prophet.*

Instead of using the word "traditional" to describe the kind of church most common today, Professor John Bowen of Wycliffe College (Toronto School of Theology), uses the word "inherited." I think this is a better description. Inheritance is passed on, is treasured, and is

guarded. When thinking about being a prophetic voice in the church, one of the obstacles is the inheritance of the church. It is also one of its strengths. A gentle prophet respects this inheritance, for that is where the foundation of faith is grounded. Yet questions about how best to use that inheritance, and warnings of its loss if guarded too closely, are necessary for change to happen. But change is hard. It implies that something is wrong or that someone is doing something wrong. It's hard to hear that something is wrong, that change is needed and that the inheritance might be in need of transformation. As a new minister, I need to walk gently as I become familiar with this new land where my call is intertwined with being a prophetic voice to the faithful, hardworking, and Christ-centred congregations that I serve. Gentleness is required.

The prophet answers a call to creativity take one from apathy to action. The prophet then calls the church to creativity—creativity in worship, in building community, in mission, and in relationship with God. Creativity enables us is to re-imagine the world into what it can become, not what it is. This re-imagination will create opportunities for the church to see itself as something different from its past. My own pastoral identity is tied to how the church of the future interacts with the culture of the day, how the church sees itself as enacting the mission of God in the world, and how the church navigates through its own previously held assumptions while staying grounded in its role of being an example of the kingdom of God. Creativity is necessary.

The challenge of my ministry will be to negotiate, with creativity and gentleness, the conflicts that seem common in churches today. There are conflicts over worship, music, leadership, buildings, money, redefinition of relationships, and so much more. These conflicts need to be thought of as opportunities for re-evaluation of inherited views and of the purpose of the church in the world.

As I travel this strange new land of pastoral ministry, I look forward to the time when it becomes familiar, when it becomes home—a home where a creative, gentle prophetic voice will be heard and a creative, gentle prophet will know that the word of the Lord has come to…me.

*"And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."*

*Micah 6:8*

# Your Story and God's

by John Congram

When I graduated from Knox College in the 1960s, I came out believing that my job as a preacher and teacher was to tell the story of the Bible, not my own story. People who come, I was told, want to see Jesus, not you. As far as possible you should be invisible.

The grain of truth in this is that no one wants to listen to someone talk about themselves either in terms of their greatness or in terms of, "Can you top my story of how evil I've been?"

The trouble with such an approach is that at best it is not effective and at worst not possible. Frederick Buechner was right when he said that

"all theology, like all fiction, is at its heart autobiographical…." And that, "if God speaks to us at all in this world, if God speaks anywhere, it is into our personal lives…." This is true for us all.

So it becomes incumbent on us all, again in Buechner's words, to "listen to the cock-crows and hammering and tick-tock of our lives for the holy and elusive word that is spoken to us out of their depths."

It helps when we realize that the people in the Bible who wrote the story of Jesus, did not tell it simply as history. They wrote the story of Jesus in terms of their own lives and times. It is not being dishonest or unfaithful for us to do the same thing. In other words, for the story to be an authentic story of Jesus, it must contain some of the story teller, and some of what she or he is going through at the time. In the same way for Jesus to come alive in our stories, they must also contain some of our own struggle.

In my ministry, I did share my own stories. When I became the editor of the *Record*, I was interviewed by my home town radio station. In the course of the interview the interviewer remarked, "Some in Wingham say that you are not really from Wingham." My response was, "Some may wish I wasn't from Wingham, but it is my hometown. After preaching for ten years in Toronto my listeners know Wingham better than they know Toronto, although some believe it to be a mythical town."

"I live in Wingham," she replied, "and I sometimes think it is a mythical town."

What do I mean that our story must be part of the story? One day, I was sitting in my study when I received a call from a lady in the neighbourhood. "Do you ever talk to people who are not in your congregation?" she enquired. "If I have to," I flippantly responded. Later that morning we sat in her kitchen sharing her story. She had faced and overcome many challenges in her life. But suddenly faced with a simple gall bladder operation she had become fearful and anxious. In the midst of our conversation she suddenly looked straight into my eyes and said, "Do you really believe in God?"

Ministers are not often faced with such questions, and for the next few seconds I remained silent. Finally I said, "Yes Helen, on my good days."

This was sharing my story on a deep level: who I was, and my struggles. Helen went on to have the operation and became a wonderful force in the church, drawing many into our congregation.

This story illustrates another point. We should not be afraid when we tell our stories to leave empty spaces or leave them unfinished. We do not need to tie them up neatly with a moral or a sentence that begins, "You should…." The spaces in our stories, the gaps as one writer calls them, allow the listener to participate and become part of the story. There is a sense that all our stories are also the other's story as well. It also allows the Holy Spirit to do the Spirit's work.

When I was attending theological school, the popular theory of interpreting the stories of Jesus was that they had only one basic point or lesson. According to this theory, you must try to find and apply that one point or lesson without getting caught up in the details or with a variety of messages. I no longer believe that. Jesus told stories that were always open to new angles and possibilities for his hearers. The Holy Spirit must always be given breathing space.

People can hear the story of the Good Samaritan and enter its action at a variety of points, depending on their own situation. We can provide our own name to the nameless one in the ditch. We have all experienced times when we felt down and out. The source of our help, a hated Samaritan, comes in a surprising and shocking way, which opens up the possibility of conversion, of being born anew.

When leading seminars on storytelling, I often began by asking the participants to write a paragraph describing some encounter they had with God. Sometimes it involved a sad or stressful time in their lives. Others told of moments of joy or ecstasy. I never found a person unable to accomplish this. Unfortunately, Presbyterians are often reluctant to share these sacred moments. We forget that God speaks through our lives.

Here is a Hassidic tale passed on to us by Martin Buber: "My grandfather

was paralyzed. Once he was asked to tell a story about his teacher and he told how the Holy Baal Shem Tov used to jump and dance when he was praying. My grandfather stood up while he was telling the story and the story carried him away so much that he had to jump and dance to show how the master had done it. From that moment, he was healed. This is how stories ought to be told." This is how we should tell the stories of our life, of our God, with excitement.

We have all heard the saying that the best teacher is the one who teaches himself or herself. In John Updike's book, *A Month of Sundays*, he has the Rev. Tom Marshfield address the woman (Frankie) he loved, "... You can't think there's a God. You know you can't. What's your reason? Give me one reason, Frankie."

"You," she said.

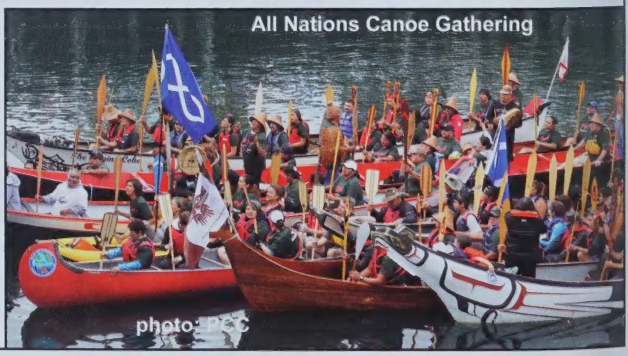
We need to tell our stories. Karl Barth put it this way when he said that the Church is Christ's earthly form of existence. Stories of God that are interwoven with our own stories have a wonderful power: power to heal, and sometimes even to raise the dead. What power they have, when we tell them.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission Receives Extension**

In mid-November, the Government of Canada announced its intention to continue work on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for another year. The Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, says that this extension will allow the Commission sufficient time to complete its mandate and prepare its final report.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada welcomes this announcement and continues to support the work of the TRC. The WMS has also been active with the TRC. WMS staff, executive members, and many other WMS members have attended and participated in the TRC National Events. Those who have attended have been surprised by how these events have changed their thinking. Although it is difficult to hear the stories of residential school survivors, it is a great privilege to grieve and begin to heal with the survivors.

The next TRC National Event will be held in Edmonton from March 27–30, 2014.



# A Humanitarian Wonder Woman

## *Samantha Nutt brings hope to places of war.*

by Amy MacLachlan

"War, and the pursuit of war, destroys us," Samantha Nutt writes in her book, Damned Nations: Greed, Guns, Armies and Aid. "It turns teenagers into killers, neighbours into genocidaires, and politicians into executioners. War is humanity at its most primitive, despite our attempts to dress it up, distance ourselves from it through technology, and frame it in acceptable terms—a battle for good in the face of tyranny or despotism or fanaticism. In the end, all wars are only one thing: people killing people."

As executive director of War Child Canada, an organization she helped found in 1999, Nutt has spent much of the last two decades amidst

the aftermath of some of the world's worst atrocities. In her book, she relates stories of rape in the Congo, of starvation in Somalia, of child soldiers in Sudan, and military oppression in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But Nutt believes change is possible. By focusing on things like education, gender equality, violence reduction, and rehabilitation, her goal with War Child is to help those affected and forgotten by war—particularly women and children—in areas of crisis and conflict. She is a sought-after voice for the media, and a popular public speaker, and as such, she will be the keynote speaker at the 2014 Presbyterian Women's Gathering next May 16–19.

While I've yet to meet her in person, after speaking with Nutt on the phone on a warm July afternoon, I get the impression that she's some sort of humanitarian Wonder Woman, tossing her golden lasso around to invoke truth-telling and expose dishonesty and injustice around the world. Her accolades—from the Order of Canada to being named one of Canada's 25 most influential figures by the Globe and Mail—speak for themselves, but when, as any modern day heroine should, she minimizes her role in all of this, shifting the spotlight to the people in the field who do the work of the organization she founded, I'm sold.

"We exploit and benefit from wrongly, injustices in other parts of the world, in ways that we are often completely oblivious to—everything from cell phones, diamonds, precious metals, the economy of war, and our pension funds that are highly invested in small arms and military companies. We can't pretend that we don't have a negative footprint in other parts of the world. We can't look at a conflict like Congo and say this has nothing to do with me and only take care of our own. To do so is to contribute to human suffering in other parts of the world. … It comes down to, what are we prepared to uphold and defend?"

*We can't pretend that we don't have a negative footprint in other parts of the world.*

The road to her superhero status began at the family dinner table. It was an opinionated place, and she was taught by her Scottish- and English-immigrant parents "to strive and fight for what I believe in, and speak my mind."

Nutt then spent much of her 43 years travelling, working and living abroad, beginning in South Africa as a very young child, then in Brazil as a teenager where friends she played soccer with by day slept in the park across from her house each night, ("I was 13 when that happened. It was the first time I really had the sense that there was a lot more going on in the world than I was exposed to back home"), then to university where she learned more about international

policy and social justice issues.

But it was when she travelled to Baidoa, Somalia, in 1995 as a 20-something volunteer with UNICEF that Nutt realized what she was meant to do. Baidoa was then called "the city of death," as 300,000 people had died of starvation and disease just three years prior. Nutt had recently completed her medical degree and was working on a master's at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her specific interest was "what happens to women and girls when states fail," and she went to Baidoa to assess maternal and child health as part of a national review of UNICEF's aid work there.

"It's impossible for anyone who comes so close to such conflict and sees such heartbreak and tragedy and injustice and the ways in which so much of what they're experiencing—the death, the misery, the starvation—so much of it is avoidable," said Nutt. "It was a difficult time in my life coming back from Somalia, but it's one that led me onto this path to figure out what we could do to make a meaningful difference. You can see the opportunities to engage people and increase local opportunities and strengthen the grassroots, but these things are often not done, so I wondered, how can we do this better?"

In addition to her work with War Child, Nutt has a day job. She's a family physician at Women's College Hospital in Toronto and a professor of medicine at the University of Toronto. Her husband, Eric Hoskins, is Ontario's Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Together, they have an eight-year-old son, Rhys. While having a child has changed her ability to just "get up and go," the danger she faces when travelling overseas does not deter her.

"There have been times when I've really felt that the risks are too great. Things that were too emotionally overwhelming and difficult," confided Nutt, like when her friend, Margaret Hassan, a 30-year veteran of humanitarian work in Iraq as director of CARE International, was kidnapped, held for ransom, and executed.

"And then I had my son, and my motivations changed again. We all have reasons why we want to see the world evolve in a more peaceful and accepting and supportive way. He made me want to get up every day and face it."

Rhys is proud of what his mom does, insisting he wear his War Child T-shirt at least once a week.

"As a parent, you want to expose your kids to help them become informed citizens, and so they understand their rights and responsibilities in that. But we don't want to turn the world into a frightening place. It's finding that balance," said Nutt. "He knows my work is to help kids like him in other parts of the world who don't have the opportunities he does. But I always

frame it in the context of what does it mean to resolve conflict and listen to another person? And why it's not okay to pick up a stick and pretend you're shooting somebody. So, at least in our house, any time there is conflict, we use it as an opportunity to teach tolerance, understanding, mutual respect, and listening. Those four things are extremely important."

Teaching children—even kindergartners—some basics about international development and foreign aid may sound tricky, but Nutt insists it isn't. Giving kids an awareness and basic understanding of the world around them—and that many children grow up amidst oppression and extreme challenges—is key in creating responsible, compassionate adults who care about the impact their actions can have on others.

"I think we often try to take huge strides, when it's small steps that are required," she said. "Maps are always important. For us, we use them to show where mom is going, or where we're going. And the relation of that place to Canada. It gives them a sense of other people and places in the world. Also—and schools do this extra well—is sharing culture; having a potluck day, or anything related to culture. It gets them to talk about it. Things that celebrate differences as well, even something as simple as eye colour or hair colour. It teaches children that even though we may look different, we all have the same goals and hopes and dreams."

She notes that while those things are important for early ages, as kids get older, they're ready for more complex issues, things like democracy, good governance, human rights, social justice, and gender rights.

"For example, why is it difficult for girls to go to school in some places? And how does that relate to international law and foreign diplomacy, and how do we change the structure and paradigms, and the role of NGOs?

"Too often we are taught that social justice is an act of charity, but the problem with that is, one, it makes it an optional concern; something we can engage in or not, depending on if we're feeling generous at that moment; and second, it's not part of our society. It's outside of society. I think that's really quite unfortunate."

In her book's acknowledgements, Nutt thanks the courageous individuals—who are heroes in their own right—who shared their stories with her. But her gratitude goes beyond that, thanking them for the very thing that has kept her going during these past 15 years of humanitarian work.

Thank you, she says, "for teaching me that there is always hope, and that it is worth pursuing."

*Reprinted with permission from the September 2013 Presbyterian Record. Samantha Nutt will be the keynote speaker at Presbyterian Women's Gathering from May 16–19, 2014.*

*Date: May 15, 2014*

*Time: 1–4 p.m.*

*Where: Sheraton Parkway Hotel*

# WMS CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

MAY 15, 2014

**It's Time to Celebrate!**

On May 15, 1914, three organizations came together to form The Women's Missionary Society (Western Division). Exactly 100 years later, on May 15, 2014, we will celebrate!

Gather together and meet old friends and new. Hear stories and learn from our retired missionaries. Interact and learn from our mission partners from around the world. Meet the women who have served the WMS throughout the years in various executive roles. Connect with the current WMS staff and enjoy catching up with past staff. Peruse the displays and memorabilia. Learn more about our history though laughter, stories, and presentations. Be entertained. And, enjoy a lovely meal over great conversation.

This event will be held at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, from 1 to 4 p.m. but the venue will be open to guests from noon to 5 p.m. Cost, including lunch, is $30. WMS members, ministers, friends, you don't want to miss out! Watch for more details to come from the 100th Anniversary Committee in mid-January.

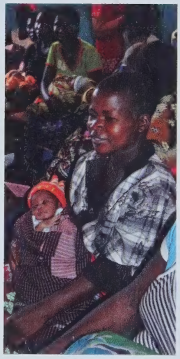
Contact Alana Martin to register at
416-441-1111 or email: amartin@presbyterian.ca.

**Photo courtesy of The Presbyterian Archives**

This is the third study on maternal health. The final study will look at maternal and child health among Canada's Aboriginal Peoples.

# MATERNAL and CHILD HEALTH: Malawi

*by Karen Bokma*



***Low contraceptive use, high fertility, and poor newborn outcomes go hand-in-hand. Mothers in Malawi have six children on average.***

## Opening Prayer

Pray for global support for maternal and child health programs:

*Dear Lord, you know every child by name, and you care about each one's past, present, and future. Guide your people to continue to care about these little ones and their mothers by investing in the gift of health for all. We pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Introduction

**18%**
*of babies are born too early in Malawi.*

Malawi is one of the least developed countries in the world. Since gaining independence in 1964, the country has gone through difficult political and financial periods. Today, the government of Malawi depends heavily on outside aid to meet the country's substantial development needs.

Three-quarters of the population live on less than $1.25 a day. Malawi's economy and a significant percentage of the population depend heavily on agriculture. As the negative effects of climate change, such as droughts and floods, are expected to worsen, additional stress will be placed on families and the economy.

HIV prevalence rates in Malawi are some of the highest in the world, with women and children bearing a heavy burden. In recent years, the Malawian government and non-governmental

organizations have made significant efforts to prevent the transmission of HIV from mother to child during pregnancy and delivery.

Added to this, high birth rates and a rapidly rising population pose risks to the ongoing development of the country. Malawi's population grew by 32 per cent between 1998 and 2008. Estimates say that the population could reach 23 million by 2025, and 37 million by 2050, if families continue to have, on average, six children.

In recent years, Malawi has made progress on many of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), with a heavy focus placed on improving maternal and child health and mortality rates. However, Malawi still has one of the highest maternal and neonatal mortality rates globally, mostly due to difficult circumstances during childbirth.

Although some of the most important interventions for safe pregnancy and delivery are quality health facilities and the assistance of a skilled health worker, many women in Malawi do not have access to these health services. Most women live more than 25 km from the nearest health facility. Because of this distance many women do not have skilled birth attendants present during labour and delivery. Combined with little access to family planning and proper nutrition, this puts women and children at an increased risk for deadly complications and birth related disabilities.

But change is happening.

## Christina's Story

Christina Gizimani is a 28-year-old mother of two. Her first baby was delivered at home. When a safe motherhood committee was established in her village, she was interested in joining.

Safe motherhood committees are democratically elected and consist of 10 members—five women and five men. The committee teaches communities about the importance of maternal health care and delivering at hospitals or

*Since 1990, infant morality has decreased by 44 percent. Part of this is due to Malawi's investment in kangaroo mother care—a technique where preterm newborns are held, skin-to-skin, by an adult.*

health facilities. The committee also keeps money to be used to pay for transport to health facilities in the event of an emergency.

Approaching the end of her pregnancy, Christina thought she had more time remaining, but labour came quickly. Without hesitation she went to a safe motherhood committee member, and they hired a bicycle ambulance that rushed her to the hospital to deliver her baby safely.

Christina knows that she and her husband would not have been able to afford this transportation themselves. "We survive on less than half a dollar a day and we had no money. I could have lost m baby, or even my life."

"Community involvement is key and makes it sustainable. I was helped by my community through the safe motherhood committee," she observed. "I see that my firstborn's survival was by grace, because delivering at home is very dangerous."

The work that is going on to improve health care services was evident to Christina. "When I arrived at the hospital they welcomed me! I was treated with love, and I received the necessary care and treatment. It is no use delivering at a traditiona birth attendant or at home—the hospital is best."

Working to improve the quality of mother and child health services, as well as overcoming cultural barriers that prevent women from receiving essential pre- and postnatal care, is crucial.

## Biblical Reflection

Read Luke 2:4–7 and Genesis 35:16–20.

Describe the circumstances in which the women in these scripture passages find themselves. Was their health, or their child's health, affected?

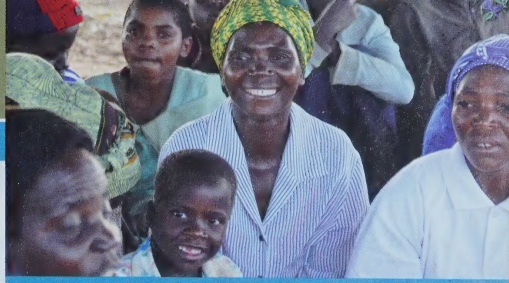
Can you think of anywhere in the world where women are giving birth under similar circumstances? What is likely to happen to them without the right care?

What then should our response be in situations where the health of mothers and babies is in danger?

## What Our Church is Doing

Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D), the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, is partnering with the Uchembere Network to benefit thousands of mothers and their children. PWS&D is working to lower birth rates, increase access to obstetric services, and empower women and communities in their health-seeking behaviour.

Through community health sessions, men, women, and health care workers are learning about the needs of mothers, newborns, and children, as well as the importance of maternal health.



## Facts on maternal, newborn, and child health

*Malawi*

- National population: 16 million (2013 est.)
- Life expectancy: 54 years
- Rural population: 80%
- Human Development Index[1]: 170 out of 187
- Maternal mortality: 460 deaths per 100,000 live births (2010)
- Under-five mortality: 92 deaths per 1,000 live births (2010)
- Infant mortality: 58 deaths per 1,000 live births (2010)

*Canada*

- National population: 35 million (2013)
- Life expectancy: 81 years
- Rural population: 19%
- Human Development Index[1]: 11 out of 187
- Maternal mortality: 8 deaths per 100,000 live births
- Under-five mortality: 6 deaths per 1,000 live births
- Infant mortality: 5 deaths per 1,000 live births

[1] The Human Development Index measures well-being as it relates to health, education and income.

PWS&D is improving the quality of mother and child health services by creating emergency communication networks and training birth attendants. Bicycle ambulances are helping women reach health care facilities for safe delivery.

Anne Mataka recalls the story of Mary, a 26-year-old mother of two. "She was pale and weak, so we asked her to speak with a midwife who then referred her to the Mulanje Mission Hospital. The project—through the safe motherhood committee—supported Mary throughout her pregnancy, including bicycle transport to the hospital. Now both the mother and baby are healthy and have returned home."

Thirty-six villages across Malawi have established safe motherhood committees, like the one Anne describes, with the support of PWS&D. These committees are strengthening the systems that allow women better access to vital health services during an emergency. Community members spread awareness and encourage women to seek prenatal care and deliver their babies in a health facility, increasing the likelihood of a safe pregnancy and delivery.

"I'm really glad the referral system can save so many lives," Anne concludes. "This is why I have been telling so many women in my village, 'If you face any kind of emergency during pregnancy, we can help.'"

The lack of male involvement in reproductive health issues has also been an issue. To address this, male motivators are trained to encourage men to support their pregnant wives. Training is also conducted on women's and human rights, reproductive health, and family planning in order to empower women to make informed decisions that will improve their overall health and wellbeing.

These efforts are ensuring that there is increased access to health care for women who had previously been restricted due to cultural limitations, such as barriers put in place by men, or insistence on using traditional birth attendants at home rather than skilled health practitioners in a health facility.

Jesse Mtika has seen the difference in her community: "We have seen a great change because of this program. Women were delivering their babies in the bush, but not now. We have learned not to use traditional herbs to induce labour because it's harmful. Women are empowered to pursue issues related to their own health.

Maternal deaths have decreased in our village because of this program."

* PWS&D's maternal health program in Malawi receives generous support from the Canadian government through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (formerly CIDA).

## To Think About

Read Genesis 35:16–20 again. Rachel died giving birth. The image of her weeping and refusing to be comforted is also invoked in Jeremiah 31:15–17. Whose voices cry out for maternal health in our world? In your community?

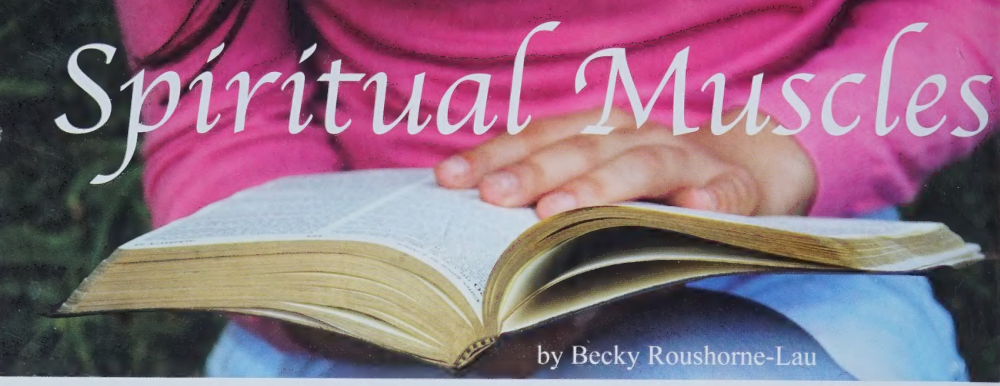
## Going Deeper

Encourage your church to use PWS&D's Sunday School resource on Maternal and Child Health. Tied to the "Healthy Babies, Happy Moms" Sunday School Challenge, this is an opportunity to educate children (Grade K-8) on the important issues related to maternal health. (Available online at WeRespond.ca/ssc-companion-kit.)

## Closing Prayer

Let's pray today for the health of women, children and families around the world. Let us pray that in building healthy families, all God's people may be empowered to strengthen their communities and nations.

*Almighty and ever loving God, giver of life, protect the health and safety of all women in childbirth and the children that they bear. Inspire your people to work for an end to the deadly conditions that cause maternal and child deaths in the world. Help build strong and healthy families and communities so that all may do your will on earth until the day when you gather us into one heavenly family. Lord of life, hear our prayer. Amen.*



# Spiritual Muscles

by Becky Roushorne-Lau

Every pen in my house appears to be empty. It's my own fault really; I keep putting empty pens back in the drawer. This morning I pulled pen after pen out of the drawer in my attempt to find one that worked. The thing is they all look perfectly fine. From the outside they are lovely looking pens but when you try to get them to write, there's nothing they can do for you. It's all looks and no substance with my pens.

It's that time of year again when looks really matter. When people join gyms and start to run because they want this year to be the year that things change. They want to look good and feel good. I'm all about feeling good and have been drinking my green smoothies almost daily to help with that. Taking care of the body is important after all as it is a gift from God, but while we are taking care of our bodies we cannot forget that our spirit needs care as well. It's kind of like my pens. Your body can look great from the outside, but if you haven't taken care of your spiritual and emotional needs, it can be all looks and no substance with you. We don't want that, do we?

The thing no one ever tells you (even though they should) is that you have to work your spiritual body out just as much (okay maybe even a little more) than your physical one. Every day we need to set time aside to be with God so we can be full and strong for the day ahead. This time spent in prayer and reflection is where we grow our spiritual 'muscles' and find new ways of looking at things. This time is what so many of us need, but don't get because we've packed our lives to the brim with so many things. This being the season of resolution, I say let's change that. Let this be the year that we prioritize our spiritual health. Let's resolve to meet God in the morning and see what changes might come from starting our day in God's midst.

Here are a few tips to get started:

- Set your alarm for 45 minutes before you usually wake up. This gives you 15 minutes to drag yourself out of bed, grab a

coffee and settle in where you are comfortable.

- Grab your Bible and some means of taking notes (either a pen and paper, your iPad or whatever you are comfortable with). You don't have to journal or write out every thought you've had, but writing out a piece of scripture that really resonates or jotting down a quick thought can be a great way to really solidify an idea. It's also great for reflecting back on.
- If you don't just want to jump from section to section, find a Bible reading plan. Personally, I love reading plans because they keep me on track and focused. You Version is a great free online service that has Bible reading plans available for the iPad and for computers. You can also print out a Bible in 90 Days reading chart or go with the Canadian Bible Society and their Bible reading plans if you'd like.[1]
- If you sleep in, don't feel bad. Life happens. Just try again the next day and don't give up. It can be hard to get into a routine but if you persevere you'll get there.
- If you are really not able to get up in the morning you can of course do this at night. but can I suggest you at least try getting up a little earlier for a period of time. I used to sleep until the last possible minute too, but now that I have a routine in place I love the solitude and peace I find in the early morning hours. It's not for everyone of course, but you might find it's not as bad as you thought if you give it a chance and it can really set up your day in a positive way.

Remember, there is no such thing as failure, only more chances to succeed. If building a routine doesn't come easily cut yourself some slack and know that it will come in time. *"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me."* – Philippians 3:12 NIV

P.S. For any ministers reading this, sermon writing and service preparation don't count. You still need time for you and God to connect individually. It will help recharge and replenish you. Seriously, you need to take care of yourself.

*Becky Roushorne-Lau is a wife and mother who also happens to be a minister in Southwestern Ontario. In her spare time, she cooks reads, writes and dreams of possibilities. She writes about family, faith, and her never ending search for the perfect dessert on her blog www.ministrytomotherhood.com.*

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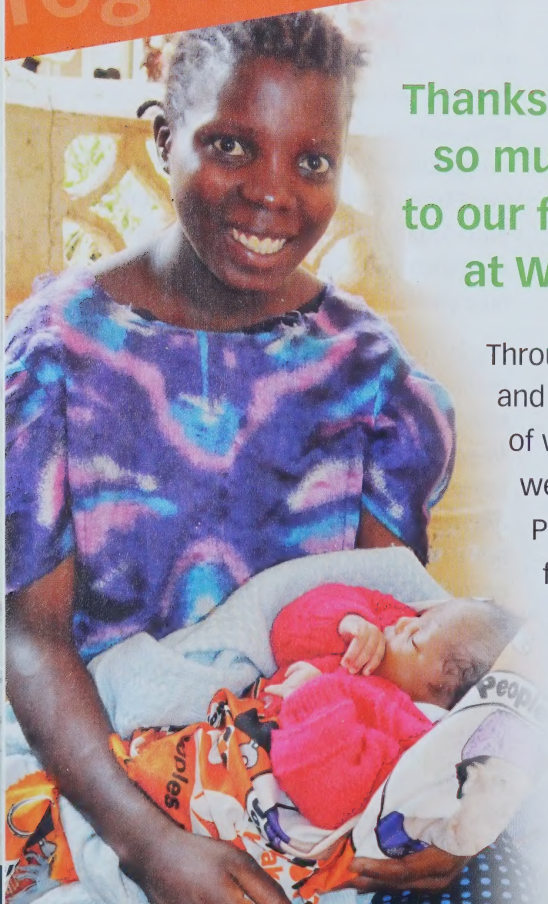
[1] The Bible in 90 Days reading chart can be downloaded at: http://biblein90days.org/bible-in-90-days-cover-to-cover-reading-schedule/. The Canadian Bible Society reading guide can be found at: http://www.biblesociety.ca/scripture_resources/daily-bible-reading.

Presbyterian World Service & Development

# Thank you, WMS!

## We Respond. Together.



**Thanks so much to our friends at WMS!**

Through your prayers and support in 2013, thousands of women, men and children's lives were changed around the world. PWS&D and our partners thank you for responding to God's call to share his love, care for those in need and serve the vulnerable.

**WeRespond.ca**

50 Wynford Dr., Toronto ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301, ext. 291

# WMS Council Executive

by Colleen Wood

The Women's Missionary Society Council Executive met from November 14–16 in Toronto.

There was much excitement shared about the upcoming Women's Gathering in May 2014. This will be an amazing time for women of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) to learn more about the church, explore social justice issues, meet mission partners from around the world, and be nurtured in their Christian faith and sent forth into their congregations, their communities, and the world. As of November 15, almost 400 women had registered. As well, over 10 women have been nominated for the Presbyterian Woman of Faith award that will be awarded at the Women's Gathering.

There was also excitement around the 100th Anniversary of the WMS, which will be celebrated on May 15 at the Sheraton Parkway Toronto North Hotel. Women from across the country, and guests from around the world, will celebrate with lunch, entertainment, displays, and lots of stories. If you are planning to attend, please get your registration in early to help the planning committee.

As always, we enjoyed an update on the work of Life and Mission Agency. The Rev. Rick Fee reports that work continues and that there is a strong focus on supporting congregations. International Ministries is noting that there are fewer people who want to spend their lives working overseas, but that they are finding more young people, and individuals who have retired early, wanting to serve for shorter periods. There are opportunities through International Ministries for these individuals. We were also reminded that the Women's Gathering is not the only exciting event for 2014. Canada Youth 2014 will be held at Brock University from July 7–12.

The work of your WMS is also ongoing. The WMS Mission Study that is printed in Glad Tidings magazine has received very positive feedback and will continue. Topics are chosen by the WMS Council Executive. Subscription rates will also increase just 50 cents for 2015. The Justice Committee continues to work and inform others about the importance of social justice.

The Book Room continues to do well, and the committee is especially thankful for the excellent work of Susan Clarke, particularly as her staff has been reduced. The Book Room provides a strong link to the PCC for congregations, bringing in relevant

resources on issues that are being addressed by the church regionally and across Canada. The Program Committee also talked about resources available to WMS groups—*Glad Tidings*, Stories of Mission, Mission Awareness Sunday, and Mission Moments—and encourages groups to make use of these.

In financial news, the WMS has provided financial grants of $400 for two individuals to attend Sabeel in Israel/Palestine, and one to participate in a Youth in Mission trip to Taiwan. They also assisted two individuals to participate in the WMS trip to India. They were also able to assist a young woman in Kenya, at the request of Rick Allen, who had received substantial acid burns to her face and body. The WMS is also planning support for HIV and AIDS training for pastors in Kenya, a Minister's Wives Widow's Training ministry in Malawi, a generator for the SaCHA Clinic in Pakistan, and possibly an ambulance for the Hatpiplia Hospital in India.

Drawing a name for a Women's Gathering early bird prize.

Looking towards the future, plans are still underway for the formation of a group that ministers to women within the PCC. We continued to brainstorm possible names, structure, and funding sources. Currently, we are suggesting the name be Presbyterian Church Women—PCW. PCW would include current WMS groups (some which do include men), the Women's Gathering, and the formation of new women's groups (some which currently exist). We trust that groups will make financial pledges to PCW, as will individuals, and we are looking for ways to add value to these groups and individuals.

The need for such an organization was once again reiterated, reminding the executive that there is a whole group of women who are only being ministered to within their congregation. There is Canada Youth and other excellent youth ministry programs for the young, and the WMS tends to attract older women. What about the women in the middle?

Finally, we were informed that a small delegation from the WMS would be travelling to Atlantic Canada in November to share the dream with them. Both the Atlantic Mission Society and the Synod of the Atlantic Provinces would participate in this meeting. In the end, the feeling was, we have a plan, let us get on with it. If we fail, at least we have tried.

# Council Executive Worship

by Betty McLagan, British Columbia Synodial

## Call to Worship:

In a world that is sometimes scary and confusing,
We come here to find sanctuary.
In a world that is sometimes ahead of itself,
We come here to encounter what is Holy.
In a society that sometimes abuses power so readily;
We come here to weave ourselves into the circle of God's encompassing love.
Let us worship God.

## Opening Prayer:

God of peace, your spirit surrounds us with thanksgiving as we gather as people of faith. Remind us that your love strengthens us and upholds us, even when we are weary.

Ever present God, we turn to you in need of forgiveness. Sometimes, it is too easy for us to go about our daily lives and ignore your call to forgive those who have hurt us. We have walked our own path rather than seek reconciliation. Forgive us and set us free. We pray in the name of the compassionate Christ. Amen.

**Read:** Joshua 24:14–15, 2 Corinthians 4:5–6

## Reflection:

This is a challenging time for the whole church, not just the WMS. Old securities are gone; the way of doing ministry, of reaching out in mission, which worked in the past, is no longer valid. Things that we took for granted are not there anymore. This is a time of transition for the whole church. Today calls for new ways to do mission, new structures, and new ways to use technology. I hear grumblings about change.

First let me say, as Christians, ministry is not about "us." What we do, what we like to do, or what we don't like doing. We get it all wrong when we build our own kingdom. There is a difference when we build on our habits, our needs, what I like, and what I think should happen. We must seek God's kingdom first, not our own.

Joshua knew that his people had to come together, to work and worship or all would be lost. So he called his people together at Shechem. Why Shechem? It

was a sacred place—a sacred place for a special meeting. There were elders, judges, heads of tribes, and many types of leaders that gathered at Shechem. Now, by no means was this a cohesive group. They were not!

Joshua was showing great leadership skills. He was old and he knew he would not be with them much longer; hence, he wanted to bond them together as a nation. He knew that their future was tied up in their ability to work together. Together, they would be stronger. Joshua challenged his people that day at Shechem to come together and to work for the common good of the nation. A rallying cry: "Choose ye this day whom you will serve, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Joshua told his people that day to put away the gods of their neighbours and serve the one and only true God. Joshua's cry could be heard down through the ages.

In New Testament times, their common bond was that they were part of the body of Christ. In Ephesians 4:5, we find a plea from Paul to observe unity. "There is one Lord, one faith and one baptism." And in 2 Corinthians 4:5, Paul tells his people, "We do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as servants." When we proclaim Jesus as Lord, we do not build our own kingdom. Christ holds the body together. In the New Covenant, the Church entered into a relationship with Christ and had a shared hope in the resurrection. That was the glue that held the early Church together. God calls us together to be servants and to carry God's message to the world. Yes, the future will be different, but we serve the same Lord. Remember Joshua's rallying cry: "Choose you this day whom you will serve, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

As we go forward, many changes will come about, but let us remember we are not building a Women's Kingdom. We do not preach ourselves. We are servants of the Living Lord. Amen.

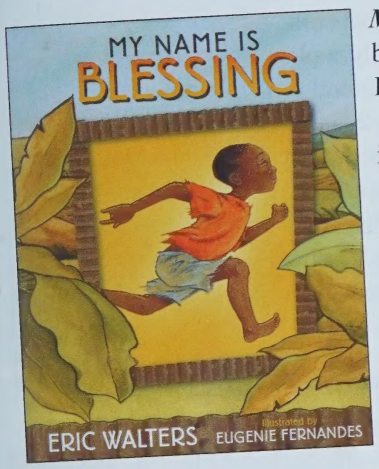
## Closing Prayer:

We give thanks, O God, for our unity of Spirit and Commitment. We thank you that we are called to love our Lord, our neighbour and ourselves. Give us strength to do so.

We pray for renewal. Where there is lack of energy, depression and a sense of loss, may your spirit sweep through and bring renewal. We pray in the name of the Christ, Amen.

**Hymn:** #477 Your Hand O God has guided

# Book Reviews



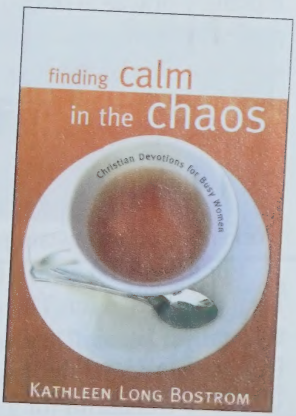

***My Name is Blessing***
by Eric Walters, illustrated by Eugenie Fernandes

This is such a lovely children's book that I immediately wanted to read it to my children.

It is the story of a young boy, with a physical disability, living in Kenya. He is the youngest of eight cousins, and they all live with their grandmother. They don't have enough food, their shelter is inadequate, and the grandmother is feeling the challenge of raising so many children as she ages. She chooses to give the care of this youngest child to a residence where he will be sheltered, clothed, fed, and educated. It is a sad story, but also a story of great hope because his grandmother still sees him regularly, she remains his legal guardian, and his entire family receives monthly care packages. Even better, this young boy is given hope and a future.

My children, four and seven, also enjoyed the book. We had some great conversations after reading this book, and I pray that it will be one small piece in their journey to become caring (and sharing) adults.

***Finding Calm in the Chaos: Christian Devotions for Busy Women***
by Kathleen Long Bostrom



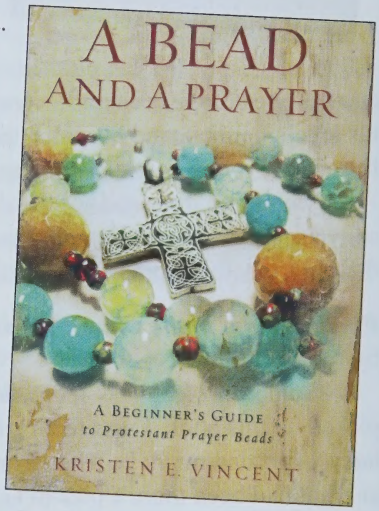

Who doesn't feel busy these days? Yet, when I picked up this book, I was feeling even more than busy—frazzled might be a better word. My prayers at night had been more a plea to God, asking to be surrounded by his peace at the end of another busy day. And my recent devotional life? Challenged at best. So, I was drawn to this book to see if it really could provide a little calm.

Although this book is organized by months, you can begin it at any time during the year. Being November, I began there. The theme for November was gratitude. I began with Day 1 of November and saw that each day I would read a one verse scripture

passage—it was brief, but meaningful. It also suggested placing a rock where I would see it often, as a 'Spirit Booster,' to remind me of God, the rock of my salvation. I also loved that it had a suggestion for reaching out: give a rock to another to remind them that God is the rock of their salvation. I knew exactly who I wanted to reach out to in this way. Actually, I planned to give one to a local friend and to mail another small rock to a friend further from home.

I also loved the devotional readings for Day 2 and Day 5 of this week. Day 3's reading was a brief poem, Day 4 contained a short scripture, and Day 6 had a short quote to read. Finally, Day 7 truly felt like a Sabbath with a breath prayer and some quite reflection. By the time I got to this day, I started formulating a list of those who I wanted to buy this book for. Each week follows the same format. Definitely, this is a meaningful devotional and a little calm in the midst of chaos.

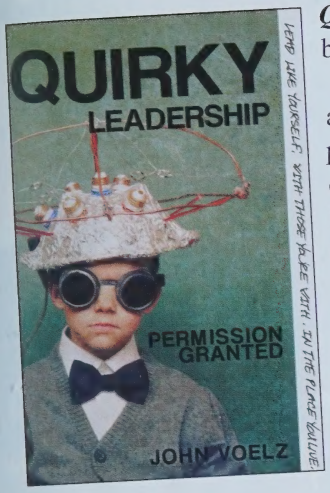
***A Bead and a Prayer: A Protestant Guide to Prayer Beads***
by Kristen E. Vincent




I share a similar story to Kristen E. Vincent. At one point in my life, I was gifted with a set of prayer beads. And, like the author, I was surprised by the gift but also slightly intrigued. I am a very tactile person, and although rooted in my réformed practices, I had recently become more interested in ancient spiritual practices. I had been spending more time in silence, and when I found my thoughts becoming less focused on God—and more focused on my to do lists—I would use a repetitive prayer to refocus myself. The prayer beads became a part of this as I began and ended my time with repetitive prayer using the beads to 'count' the recitations.

For Vincent, the gift of her first prayer beads became more than a personal call to spiritualty; they started her on a vocational calling, which included making prayer beads for others, leading workshops on Protestant prayer beads and writing this book.

For those who want a thorough introduction to prayer beads, this book is ideal. I learned a lot. There are instructions and encouragement for making your own prayer beads. There are also four studies to use individually or as a group that include scriptures, readings, and a prayer using your prayer beads. This book would be wonderful for a 5-week Bible study group.




***Quirky Leadership: Permission Granted***
by John Voelz

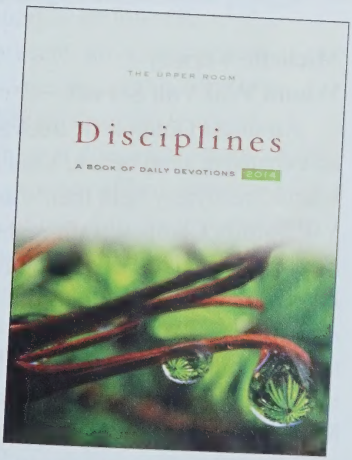
Sometimes you can judge a book by its cover, and this was one of those times. It was hard to walk past this book. The cover shows a 'quirky' child, complete with funny glasses and an even funnier homemade hat. In his introduction, John Voelz describes a very challenging leadership situation he was placed in. He made it through, and in making it through he discovered much about himself and about his leadership gifts. He discovered that he is a leader, even though he doesn't wear trousers or tucks in his shirts, and he doesn't particularly like golf.

This book is an easy read with lots of ideas to help you become the "best 'you' you can possibly be." Voelz makes himself vulnerable. He shares examples. He gives permission. Although his experience is as a pastor, it is relevant to anyone in leadership. I will pass this book along to my husband and then to my minister. I expect he will pass it along too. Not a traditional leadership book, but one well worth investing in.

***Looking for a new devotional book for a new year?***

The Book Room has an excellent selection, including:

- The Upper Room: Disciplines 2014, A Book of Daily Devotions
- Day by Day with Charles Swindoll
- Christian Mystics: 365 Readings and Meditations by Matthew Fox
- 365 Meditation for Grandmothers by Grandmothers.

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Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
416-441-1111 800-619-7301
bookroom@presbyterian.ca

**Michelle Verwey**
**Whom Will You Serve?**

Amongst Douglas fir trees and an expansive sand beach, Vancouver Island Presbytery held their Camp VIP Family Camp at Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Park on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, from August 2–5, 2013. I was asked to speak at camp about my experiences nursing in India with International Ministries, supported by Presbyterians Sharing. Returning from India, I find a backwoods nature experience to be a rejuvenating blessing, so it was my pleasure to join the community of "VIPers" in awe of creation and in faithful discussion about the adventures the Lord has for us all.

"But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) Over this long weekend, we spent time reflecting together on this verse from Joshua. We spoke about the divine plans that God has for each one of us, embracing them and our God.

India was never in my plans, but I am so fortunate it was in Christ's plans for me. Over the weekend, I explained why serving in Madhya Pradesh, India, is an adventurous blessing. During this time, I spoke about what I do in India, the state of the girl child in this region, what rural India is like, and the work of the rural community health network that Presbyterian World Service & Development funds, thanks to the support they receive from their donors.

Madhya Pradesh is one of the most underdeveloped states in India, with malnutrition rates worse than those in sub-Saharan Africa. The population of this region is over 72 million, and more than 40 per cent of this population belongs to nationally recognized groups with higher poverty and lower development status than other groups in India. I reside in the city of Indore, the largest city in the state which is affectionately called "the heart of India" because of its central location. This is where I teach nursing at the Middle India Board of Education Graduate School for Nurses.

West of Indore, the rural community health network works to improve the health, livelihood, and well-being of many villagers. This is where my students have gone for their community health practical experience, amongst the Bhil tribal group. The community health network provides services in accordance with the priorities identified by the villagers, evolving these services over time. The current program includes water and sanitation works, health awareness and medical camps, school health activities, HIV/AIDS education and screening, traditional remedies, maternal and child health, income generation projects, self-health groups with micro-loan activities, a wide range of agriculture and nutrition initiatives and training, and rural livelihood aspects such as animal husbandry training, vet camps, and watershed/soil conservation. The network coordinates efforts with local authorities, government, and established Indian non-profit groups with expertise or interest.

At present, government health service coverage in this rural area (and other rural areas) is sparse. Even where it does exist, many of the villagers cannot afford services or the cost of travel to the government hospitals. The community network provides primary health services to those in need to promote health and link villagers to a referral system for higher levels of care. When government services are available, the network hands that aspect over so the service is not duplicated and resources can be used for other concerns or villages in need.

Unfortunately, in the past few years Canada has changed how it

distributes international aid and this network is no longer eligible for grant support from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). This has resulted in PWS&D being the sole, rather than joint, financial contributor. The number of villages covered by services has decreased to ensure effective activities in a few places instead of smaller, less effective services in a larger number of villages. I would like to encourage readers to consider fundraising to increase donations to PWS&D by reaching out to potential donors outside your congregation; you can link your plans with Christ's divine plan for equality for all, by supporting great works like this community health network.

*In September 2013, Michelle started a Master's degree in Public Health in Developing Countries, at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She hopes to return to India as International Ministries mission staff in late 2014, supported by Presbyterians Sharing.*

## SYNODICAL

The **Alberta** Synodical meeting was moved to First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton, after poor weather kept us from travelling to Camp Kanniwan on April 6.

Katherine Allen presented her PowerPoint on the tour of Palestine. They were fortunate to have a Syrian guide who was able to take them to areas often not seen by tourists. After the business part of the meeting, a delicious lunch was served. The Rev. Annabelle Wallace closed the meeting with a communion service.

The fellowship with Calgary and Southern members of the WMS was missed, but we shall pray for better weather next year.

## PRESBYTERIAL

**Grey Bruce** Presbyterial held their Fall Rally on September 26 in Geneva Presbyterian Church in Chelsea. President Pat Edwards welcomed everyone and opened the meeting in prayer.

The women of Southampton led the worship using the theme, Thoughts of Thankfulness. We were reminded to not look at what we have lost, but what we have left, and to be thankful. We then assembled into several groups and found scripture passages on thanks. We also shared what we are thankful for. We have so many blessings, including the freedom to meet together to worship, funds to support various projects, the peace and eternal hope we have in Jesus Christ, and for church family and friends.

Hanneke Cost Budde and Pat Edwards

After a delicious lunch, we enjoyed special music by Evelyn Lowe and Ruth McCombie. Our afternoon speaker, Hanneke Cost Budde, shared of her 40 years of work in Tanzania. In Tabora, she was given a big house to live in; and at first she thought it was too big, but before long it was filled with children who needed a home. The children help with the cleaning and cooking. Hanneke works in a social program that includes medical work with women and orphans. There are many orphans in the area, and this year Hanneke has supported 33 children, helping with uniforms, shoes, and school supplies.

When she was asked how she does it all, Hanneke said, "When God gives you something to do, He helps you do it. Also when God says go, we must GO." She thanked everyone for their prayers and support.

The afternoon closed with courtesies and the hymn, Now Thank We All our God.

-Eleanor Crabtree

**Sarnia** Presbyterial met recently at Laurel Lea-St. Matthew's Church, Sarnia, for their fall meeting. The Rev. Janine Dekker extended a welcome and said grace. A soup and sandwich luncheon was enjoyed with birthday cake for long time member, Margaret McDonald from St. Andrew's, Sarnia, as she was celebrating her 90th birthday.

The theme of the meeting was, Walk on the Wild Side. The guest speaker was Betty Dee Black, 80 years of age, of Sarnia, who spoke on her summer 896 km walk on the Bruce Trail from Niagara Falls to Tobermory over very rough terrain. Sixty-seven people completed the walk, raising over $43 000 for the local hospice. In her lifetime, Betty has done many walks throughout the world and Canada for great causes. Betty said that her walks are all about people helping other people. Besides being a healthy form of exercise, as you walk you commune with God and nature and let your troubles go. With God by her side, Betty has made a difference in the lives of so many people.

Sarnia Presbyterial President Beverley Cassel and Margaret McDonald

Dorothy Neal, with the ladies from Laurel Lea-St. Matthew's, led the devotions with the theme, Love and Care for Others.

**Hamilton** Presbyterial held their Fall Rally on September 28 at Knox Presbyterian, Burlington, with 54 ladies present. The organist challenged us in our morning singing not to be gophers, but singing buffaloes, with positive results. We met the host church's new minister, the Rev. Emma Duncan.

Our guest speaker was Mary Jane Bisset, Regional Staff for Southwestern Ontario, who showed us her expertise by introducing the 2013-14 Maternal Health study from *Glad Tidings*. A delicious lunch followed.

**Brockville** Presbyterial met for their Fall Rally at St. Paul's Presbyterian, Kemptville, on September 28 with the theme, Let God Use Us. Catherine Blatch,

## In the Society Submissions

When possible, email submissions to In the Society to Gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. Remember, that your submissions are being read by many who are not personally involved with your group. So, focus on the aspects of your meeting that will have relevance to WMS members across the country:

- What was something new you learned from your speaker?
- Did you try a new format for your meeting?
- Was there something unique about your entertainment choice or venue?
- What was the most meaningful or creative moment?

Submissions are often edited for space and consistency. Local articles should be kept to 100 words, and are only printed as space allows.

Please note, due to space and publishing timelines, articles will often take 2–3 months from the time we receive them, to the time they are printed.

president, constituted the meeting, and welcomed members and guests.

Using the text of Acts 2:37–47, Lois Beaton, June Graham, and Claire McPhee led the worship and reminded us that God chooses humble people to serve him and encourages us to come out of our comfort zone.

Our guest speaker, Elizabeth Robinson, a Concordia student, spoke of her trip with the Presbyterian Church of Malawi. She spoke of the church services being alive with singing and dancing. She visited youth retreats, schools for orphans, and a mission hospital. She also saw wells, solar panels, and farming projects. While there, her team helped to build roads and mix cement to repair a home. They also played with the local children and gave them sports equipment as a gift.

**Lanark-Renfrew** Fall Rally took place in Renfrew on September 16. President Lois Patchell, of Smiths Falls, opened the meeting with a Thanksgiving prayer. Betty Zwiers, of Renfrew, welcomed the ladies, and the WMS purpose was recited. Joan Hilliard led devotionsfrom Hebrews 10:25 on the theme, Meet and Encourage. She read the story of Annie Sullivan as a young girl and of the flight patterns of the Canadian geese from the book, Beside Still Waters. Mary-Lynn McConnachie read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-18, which encourages us all to keep on meeting and doing helpful things.

Business followed and everyone was encouraged to attend the Synod meeting in Cornwall on October 18–19 and to register for The National Women's Gathering in May 2014.

Our afternoon speaker was Julie-Ann Morton, a Baptist pastor and member of the Arnprior Neighbourhood Link Fountain since

2009. Fountain stands for **F**riendship, **O**pportunity, **U**nderstanding, **N**urturing, **T**eaching, **A**cceptance, **I**nspiration and **N**ew Hope. The Link's statement of faith is the Apostles' Creed. The Fountain assists churches in expressing God's love by effectively responding to the needs of the people in the neighbourhood. The community life centre is a welcoming drop-in place where people are nurtured and empowered in their everyday lives. Julie shared a PowerPoint presentation illustrating the variety of services offered (Thrift Boutique, The Café, Blessing Store, Wee Shine for Kids, Community Kitchen, Chapel, and Resource Center). After Julie-Ann was thanked, the meeting closed with the president leading prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

## LOCAL

At the October 9 meeting of the **Joy Mahood** WMS at St. Columba Presbyterian in Parksville, British Columbia, two members were presented with Life Membership pins. Hazel Smith, who herself is a long time and honoured member of the WMS, as well as a dedicated member of the PCC, made the presentations to Doris Preuss and Vivien Williamson in honour of their extensive service to the WMS and PCC missions. Doris has been a member of St. Columba since 1990 (23 years) while Vivien has been a member since 1993 (20 years). Our congratulations and thanks go out to them both!

The **Marion Ritchie** WMS of Cromarty Presbyterian Church celebrated their 100th Anniversary on May 26. Cromarty's first group began on July 1903, when Amy McPherson formed a Women's Mission Society. In 1913, Marion Ritchie, helped to organize the Young Women's Mission Band, which changed its name in January 1936 to honour her.

Claudette Elliott welcomed the 60 guests who represented Presbyterial, past WMS members, and current WMS and congregational members. Alice Gardiner narrated the many events and fundraisers we have been involved in over the years. The Rev. Ed Hoekstra and Jackie Hoekstra, past missionaries to Malawi, were our speakers. Joyce Miller and Lillian Sparling were presented with Honourary Life memberships.

Cromarty Marion Ritchie WMS

Evangeline Williams
Gladys McKillican
St. Andrew's Presbyterian WMS, Barrie ON

Marna Devolin
Kay Moors
St. Columba, Belleville ON

Anne Rude
Westmount WMS, Edmonton AB

Beth Looby
Horning Mills-Maple Valley WMS, Shelbourne ON

Joyce Stow
St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church WMS, Southampton ON

Bernice McKenzie
Thornhill Presbyterian WMS, Thornhill ON

Isobel Benevides
Trinity WMS, Toronto ON

Katherine Freisen
Fairview Presbyterian Church WMS, Vancouver BC

Betty Cope
Helen Hatten
Rosemary McKnight
Knox Presbyterian, Welland ON

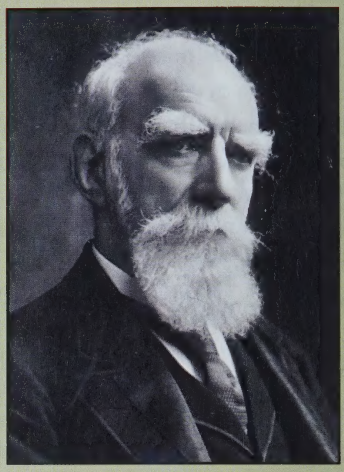
# God's Hand in the New Year

by Maureen E Kowal

It's raining
Water hitting the pavement
Splat, splat
A river of water runs
down the driveway
And I think that water reminds me
Of washing away my troubles
A river of good times and bad
I look at the creek flowing steadily
And I think as the New Year begins
That I'm like that creek
Slipping and sliding into the rocks
And in places, the creek pools
Like God's hand saying
Wait I'm here
Walk in my pools of quiet
As you head into the New Year

# provisionaries

**Planting seeds of hope.**
**For generations to come.**



## Lord Strathcona
**(Donald Smith) 1820-1914**

Moving to Canada when he was 17 to become a fur trader with the Hudson's Bay Company, this Scottish Presbyterian rose to become the company director. His dream to connect Canada via railroad became reality when he drove the last spike in 1885. His other contributions included:

- building the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal
- providing scholarships for the first women to study at McGill University
- supporting the new scouting and cadet movements in Canada
- leaving generous bequests for McGill University and Presbyterian College.

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# Glad Tidings

March/April 2014

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Glad Tidings

**March/April 2014**

**Volume 90, No. 2**

**EDITOR:** Colleen Wood

**DESIGN:** Alexis McKeown

**CIRCULATION:** Alana Martin

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Canada

*Glad Tidings* reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

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Recently, I heard an amazing story. It is the story of one woman, a widow, and mother of twin teenage boys. She is a part-time cleaner at a local mission that serves breakfast to over 25,000 people every year. She challenged the clients of that breakfast program to donate money to that mission. She offered to match every dollar that was donated. The clients donated $54 which she matched. It may not sound like much, but to those clients, every quarter or dollar may be all they have. And for this mom, $54 is a lot of money.

I told her how amazing I thought she was. I told her what a great idea it was to give others an opportunity to share and how proud I was of those clients. Their giving was true generosity. She was definitely excited about their giving and her opportunity to match it. She was grateful for a part-time job that let her do this. To me, this woman served as an example of how to live as Easter people.

I asked her if she would allow me to match the $54 donation from the clients as well. I just felt so moved by her that I needed to do something tangible too. At that moment, I needed to live Easter too.

Easter is what our faith is about. Easter is transformation. Even when times are tough, even when hope seems gone, there is something new. There is new life. It is choosing joy when others might choose sorrow. It is being constantly renewed and recreated. It might mean taking a leap of faith. I don't know what that leap of faith looks like for you.

Perhaps, you have always wanted to try to sing in the choir or praise team at your church.

Perhaps, you have wanted to ask that hockey mom you see every week out to church.

Perhaps, you have always wanted to take up the challenge to read the whole Bible.

Perhaps, you have wanted to increase your giving or begin tithing.

Take the leap of faith. Live as an Easter people.

*Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."* Mark 12: 43–44 (NIV)

# Retreat: FINDING BALANCE

## A PLACE WHERE WE CAN MEET GOD.

by Fiona Van Wissen

Solitude and silence. Listening. Praying. Meditative walking. Free of distractions, yet listening for that one small voice. Is this what it means to go on retreat? A day, a weekend, a week offered to God. Time set aside, to listen. Intentional. Space to just be. Opportunity to discover who God created us to be.

Pondering a question, seeking God's guidance, or waiting for the next step to be made visible. When we go on retreat, we are often at a turning point; there may be a big decision to be made, but it need not be a big decision in the eyes of the world. It may be a small change we are feeling called to make in our lives. Often to set a new course, we may need time apart, in a place apart.

Like muddy water clearing, snow melting, or the new buds of spring growth emerging, a retreat is a time for growth. It may also be time of struggle where we wrestle with God. To do this, we need to be in a place where we can meet God, where we can recognize God's hand in creation: in the delicately unfurling fronds of a fern, the stars shining in the dark of night, or in the sound of the falling rain.

## What is a Retreat?

It is a place to rest in God's love, just as fresh snow rests gently on pine boughs. It is a place of healing where God's love can pour into us and through us to others. It is a place of renewal where we may see that God truly is making all things new, including ourselves. It is a place to find perspective, to refocus, and to consider our lives and the world from God's point of view.

Most of all, it is a place where our eyes may be opened to the presence of God, within us and all around us.

## Preparing for a Retreat

You might choose to go on retreat for just one day, a weekend, a week, or longer. The length of your retreat depends on what time you can make available and what you are seeking. You might also make the journey a part of your retreat time by travelling slowly, perhaps taking the train or driving on country roads.

Pack light and try to avoid bringing too many things that might distract you. Preparing for a retreat can be a time to be intentional about praying for your time away, and you might even pray as you pack each item into your bag. A small notebook is very useful for journaling. For me, this is a very important item and I usually have one book that I use for writing indoors and another smaller notebook that I can slip in my pocket while I am walking outdoors.

## The Rhythm of a Retreat

There will be an initial time of entering into your retreat, a middle time where you may be fully immersed in the present, and then there will be a turning point where you begin to look towards returning home.

## The Beginning

As you enter into a time of retreat, pray that you might leave yesterday and the future trustfully in God's care. A retreat, whether it is one day or several days long, will require a time for settling, of getting used to the silence, and perhaps a time of exploring the space you are in. I find I need to unpack, settle into my room, and then check out the rest of the space available to me, whether it is a common room or outdoor trails. Only when I know my surroundings can I begin to settle and turn inwards to become aware of where God might be nudging me. Many people also find themselves in need of rest and may spend the first days of a longer

retreat catching up on sleep. Often on a longer retreat, the first day may be a time of anxiety or loneliness which eases after the first night's sleep as you begin to feel more at home in your surroundings.

### The Middle

The middle of the retreat time is a time of space and quiet where you may cultivate an attitude of attentiveness by centering yourself into prayerfulness and openness of heart.

### The Returning

At some point it will be time to prepare for leaving, to prepare to return to the life you have stepped away from for a time. This is a time to process and integrate the reflections and insights discovered during the retreat. A closing ritual may be helpful, perhaps with a special meal or a final walk to give thanks for the time of retreat and for the seeds that have been planted or nourished in your heart.

### What to do on Retreat?

Many people find time on retreat well spent in praying, resting, reading, writing, and walking. Others use art or music for reflection and offer their creativity to seek and praise God.

Some suggestions for a time of retreat follow below:

- *Read Scripture:* Retreats can be a time to read scripture slowly, to allow ourselves time to absorb it more fully and perhaps to memorize a verse or passage that holds special meaning for us.
- *Give Thanks:* You might want to devote some time in your retreat for giving thanks to God. This may be as simple as writing a list of ten or more things that you are thankful for and then thanking God for each of the things on your list.
- *Write a Letter:* Write a letter to a friend, to someone you need to ask for forgiveness, to thank someone; or write a letter to God about something you are struggling with. This letter may be for your eyes only or to share.
- *Write a Poem:* If you are like me, you may like to write but rarely do unless you have set the time aside and are in a quiet meditative space. A simple short poem that is very conducive to the retreat experience is to write 'a photograph' of the moment. Just write a few lines describing what you can see, hear, smell,

# Be Still, and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10 NIV

and feel at a given moment to create a poetic word picture of your experience. This can help you to become more aware of your surroundings and be fully present to the moment.

- *Make a Collage:* People who find sketching or painting is not their thing may enjoy being creative with a simple collage. One way to do this is to gather old magazines and tear out any pictures or words that speak to you. Glue them on a page and then write about how you feel seeing those pictures together. I still have one of these collages I made years ago and it gives me inspiration.
- *Find a Special Place Outdoors:* Find a place outside where you can sit quietly for a period of time and just observe all that is around you. Use all of your senses to experience nature around you. You don't need to think about anything as you sit, but you may want a small notebook to jot down anything that comes into your head.
- *Watch a Sunrise:* Watching a sunrise is a wonderful way to greet the day or catch the sun setting as you end your day.
- *Walk a Labyrinth:* Walking a labyrinth can be a prayerful experience as you follow the winding path that takes you to the centre and then back to where you started. There are labyrinths in many parks, hospital gardens, and churches, as well as at retreat centres such as Crieff Hills.

**Where to go on Retreat?**

People travel around the world to go on retreats while others may find a place of retreat very near to them, which may be at a local park

or in their own home. There are a great variety of retreats offered from personal retreats that you plan yourself, to a group retreat where there is a speaker addressing a theme. A retreat may be silent for the entire time or just for a part of the time. However, before embarking on a long silent retreat it is often recommended that you first experience a short silent retreat as it can be quite challenging to go on a silent retreat.

From my experience working at a retreat house on the island of Iona in Scotland, I have heard from many individuals and groups how valuable their times of retreat have been for them. Each person's experience may be very different as God reaches out to each of us right where we are, often in surprising ways.

One retreat that was a very special experience for me was held in Trosly, France, and was led by Jean Vanier, the founder of the International Community of L'Arche. L'Arche provides homes and workshops for adults with developmental disabilities who live together with assistants from around the world. Listening to Jean Vanier's simple but profound stories, and sharing in a small group where we washed each other's feet on the final afternoon, was a humbling experience.

The town of Assisi in Italy is a most beautiful place where many go on pilgrimage. While I was volunteering at L'Arche in Rome, I spent a weekend in Assisi by myself. This became a time of personal retreat as I walked to the different places that St. Clare and St. Francis had ministered and read a wonderful book called *Pilgrims in Assisi, A Retreat with Francis and Clare*, written by Murray Bodo and Susan Saint Sing.

Closer to home, I have spent time on retreat in a cabin in the woods of Nova Scotia and in the Hermitage at Crieff Hills where I am now on staff. Crieff Hills Community is our national retreat centre, owned and operated by The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Crieff is a 'Place Apart' where many come on personal retreats. Crieff also hosts a weekend women's retreat each fall where women gather to listen to a speaker, share good food, and renew friendships.

At Crieff Hills there is a lovely little stone building called the Hermitage where one person can stay for the day or overnight and enjoy the solitude. Some people enjoy walking

the trails through the woods or walking the stone labyrinth in the field by the prayer shelter. Guests describe the Hermitage as a 'sanctuary' and a 'peaceful, sacred space' where they find renewal and blessing. Crieff also welcomes guests for personal retreats at the new Pines Suites.

Many guests just come for a day to hike the trails and then spend some quiet time reading or writing in the common room. Crieff Hills truly is 'a place apart to restore your spirit'.

One of our guests at Crieff recently wrote that 'God's presence met me here.' Perhaps, at times, it is in the stillness and the quiet that God can speak to us most clearly. For in the Psalms, we read "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10 NIV

In her Christmas message to the Commonwealth this past Christmas, Queen Elizabeth ll opened her speech by commenting on how we all need to find the right balance between action and reflection. She recounted a short story of a man she knew who "spent a year in a plaster cast recovering from an operation on his back. He read a lot, and thought a lot, and felt miserable. Later, he realised this time of forced retreat from the world had helped him to understand the world more clearly." The Queen said she hoped we all would have moments in the coming year to pause for prayer and reflection to help us to renew ourselves in God's love.[1]

We are now in Lent, a season that lends itself to reflection. Perhaps you have already scheduled a Lenten retreat. If not, it is not too late to set a day, or even a weekend for quiet prayer. May this time of Lent be one of preparation—for listening, for giving, and for caring for the world.

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[1] http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/queen-elizabeth-urges-time-for-quiet-reflection-in-christmas-day-message-1.2475929

# An All-Ages Easter

by Katie Munnik

When our daughter was small, we decided to sidestep the Easter bunny and instead offer her an Easter morning treasure hunt around our little apartment. We wrote out clues and scattered them in conspicuous places. With a fair bit of parental involvement, she puzzled her way through to the end where she found a gorgeous chocolate lamb, and an accompanying Bible verse about the Lamb of God. We felt very clever (and she felt clever, too). It was like we were sowing seeds for her growing faith. Later that morning, she was greeted warmly at the church door with the inevitable questions:

*Did you get lots of lovely chocolate? Was the Easter bunny good to you?*

We felt indignant. Undercut. And a little silly—as if our own chocolate scheme was a sufficient way of conveying the truth of the Gospel.

Chocolate is not the only complication. Eggs, rabbits, baskets, and new hats can also confuse matters. We *want* children in our churches to come to know this central story of our faith, but we find ourselves tangled up in the sweeter, easier parts of the season. The Easter story is a hard one to tell. There is so much violence, history, and grief (and abstract theology!) and often we are unsure how to share it as good news with children. Where do you start? How do you share this story?

I'd like to begin a conversation with other parents, but also among our

wider church families. How might this look in our Sunday Schools and in our sanctuaries? What conversations do we need to have with our Sunday School teachers and worship committee members? How can all of us share Easter with children in ways that make sense?

*Beginning at Home*

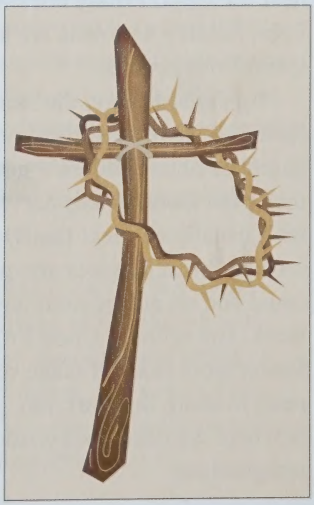
I think we need to begin with ourselves. We are an Easter people. We need to show our children that Easter is important to adults. This is the biggest story of our year. If nothing else, we want kids to catch a glimpse of that. Easter matters to us. The Easter story is the joyful centre of who we are. Our children might see that in our anticipation and planning for Easter. They might find it in the memories we share, or the books we choose to read, or the ideas we bring up over dinner together, or the quiet words we speak at bedtime. Our living can tell our faith.

*Giving up Lent*

The next step is to see the season and not just the 'Sunday'. Just as Advent intentionally draws us into the season of waiting before the birth of Christ, so Lent is also a season of preparation. Taking these last weeks of winter slowly helps us to prepare for what is ahead. Instead of focussing on Lent as a season of abstinence, we could use it as a time to retell the stories of Jesus' ministry. Rather than giving up chocolate, we could spend time talking about the people Jesus might have met. We could look at maps and photos of Israel, learn about the countryside, and sing songs together that share his words. We could find new words to tell his parables. Easter is the celebration of Jesus' return to life—let's spend Lent learning about His pre-Easter living as a family.

*Holy Week Is Hard*

By the time we get to Holy Week, we'll be in the practice of looking deeply into these stories together. Holy Week is a difficult one for children. To begin with, there are too many church services. Between Sundays, there are several points at which churches may offer services, meals, and other opportunities to gather and reflect. Families need to decide what services they can attend, and churches need to consider how they are sharing the story with children and their families in and out of worship time. Part of that means not judging families, who choose not to



come out for each service listed in the bulletin, but rather equipping them to share these stories at home. Part of that also means welcoming and including children when they come to the Seder Supper or the Maundy Thursday worship.

Palm Sunday seems a natural with children. The celebration, the parade and shouting, the feeling of doing something a little out of step with the usual practices of Sunday morning decorum—these add up to an exciting Sunday for many families. But there is a danger that Palm Sunday is seen by the congregation as an opportunity to admire the children. We can all take joy in it. It is a part of the Easter story to be shared by Christians of all ages in different ways. However, while children may simply revel in the joyful parade, there is a complicated note in the air that adults may also hear. In the echo of the hosannas, we hear the Good Friday cries to crucify. Palm Sunday's crowds are kin to Good Friday's mob.

By Good Friday, the story is harder to share with children. Many churches omit children's ministry as they plan Good Friday services. It isn't usually an ideal family worship service. Most services are quieter than usual and on an irregular day of the week. But without Good Friday, the Easter story doesn't make sense. We need to share this part, too. And this is where we need both wisdom and imagination.

*Good News*

Children hear the good news differently. Just as they have a hard time grasping abstract concepts, they do not understand Easter in the same way that adults can. Carolyn C. Brown develops this idea extensively in her wise book, "Sharing the Easter Faith with Children: Helping Children Observe Lent and Celebrate Easter." She writes:

"Our task is to tell (children) the stories in ways that are good news to them where they are and, in the process, lay the foundations for growing understanding and deepening faith."

I often use Carolyn C. Brown's helpful blog worshippingwithchildren.blogspot.com in my own ministry. For 35 years, Carolyn worked in children's ministry during which time, she became passionate about welcoming children into a congregation's worship as full participants. She writes from a lectionary-based Presbyterian perspective. In her Easter book, she explains that children's understanding of Easter differs significantly from that of adults. To begin with, death has very little reality. Young children have a difficult time understanding the finality of death so Jesus' resurrection is not earth-shattering or new. It is just another happy fairytale and it can be confusing why adults make such a big deal out of it. New life is a concept which does not make sense,

either, as life itself is continually new and surprising for young children. We need to look more closely to find an Easter hope that children can celebrate. Brown alerts us to themes that we can emphasie with children of different ages.

- It is good news that God is stronger than any "bad guys."
- It is good news that Jesus is always with us.
- It is good news that God forgives us when we make mistakes.
- It is good news that God's love is stronger than anything that scares us.

As well as this theological perspective, Brown offers useful practical comments. She suggests, for example, that because preschoolers hear every story as a separate story and may not connect them even if they are about people with the same name, every telling of any part of the crucifixion story must always be completed with the Easter story. She challenges us to think more intentionally about how we share and shape the story so that children might experience and learn the good news.

*Hard Questions*

I hear her challenge as a call to ask hard questions as we prepare to share the Easter story.

What do we say when a four-year old asks, "Why did Jesus die?"

Is the Easter story best shared in worship or in Sunday School? How about both? And what does that look like?

How can we equip parents and families to share their understanding of Easter's good news together?

What can we do with children to help them grow into their faith and help us to celebrate ours as well?

*How high and how wide*

Children learn best when they can be involved in the story. It's how we do Christmas—with pageants, advent wreaths, imaginative carols that place us in the midst of the story. Maybe we could reimagine how we do Easter, too. Sometimes we need to stretch beyond our usual habits. Easter's good news is bigger than we can understand—it is a reality that we grow into. Palm Sunday's parade, Good Friday communion, even Easter Sunday chocolates and new clothes—each of these traditions invites us to step away from our routine weekly practices and to use all of our senses to participate in the Easter story in new ways. When we do this intentionally as a congregation made up of people of all ages, the good news of Easter permeates our life together.

*Katie Munnik is an Ottawa writer currently living in Edinburgh with her studying husband and three growing children. She writes The Messy Table every Monday on www.presbyterianrecord.ca.*

# In Honour of Him

## Spices and aromatic gums used to honour Jesus' life and death

by L. June Stevenson

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, wise men with knowledge of astrology came from the East bringing costly gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to worship him and to honour his birth.

After Jesus was crucified, Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus, boldly asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus' body down and lay it in his own new tomb in a nearby garden. Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night, came too, bringing a hundred pounds of embalming ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Together they wrapped Jesus' body in a long linen cloth saturated with the spices, as is the Jewish custom of burial.

In the early morning hours, women came bearing spices to prepare the body for burial in honour of his life. These women, who included Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James, were ordinary women: family, friends, and followers. Their gifts were common spices in use at the time especially for anointing bodies.

What links these events together? The words of the beloved Christmas carol, "We Three Kings," explains the meaning behind the Magi's gifts, foretelling the life and death of one who came to save Israel. The fact that the holy family was given gold may have eased their trials in journeying to Egypt to keep their precious son from the wrath of Herod.

Frankincense was a costly tribute of praise and adoration to celebrate the birth of the one believed to be born King of the Jews. Myrrh, also an aromatic resin, but with darker undertones, foretold the direction Jesus' life was to take, and of his suffering and death: "Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume, breathes a life of gathering gloom, sorrowing, sighing, dying, sealed in the stone cold tomb." "Frankincense to offer have I, incense owns a Deity nigh… worship the God most high" (#173 BOP).

My favourite Epiphany hymn,

"Brightest and best of the stars of the morning," (#175 BOP) speaks to the same gifts that we could offer if we were wealthy (then reminds us of equally, if not more important gifts, like prayer and adoration).

Frankincense and myrrh are both derived from tree sap or gum resin. People in East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula produced frankincense and myrrh for some 5,000 years. For much of this time, these aromatic resins were the region's most important commodity, with a trade network that reached across Africa, Asia, and Europe. Chinese physicians recommended myrrh for skin disorders and nervous diseases. The Catholic Church has been one of the largest consumers of frankincense in recorded history.

The Queen of Sheba (present day Yemen), on hearing of King Solomon's fame and wisdom, visited him from Ethiopia fearing her spice business might be hurt by his merchant fleet. Her caravan was very large; her many camels were laden with the finest spices and stones. In 1 Kings 10 and 2 Chronicles 9, we are told that, "Never again were so many spices brought in as those the Queen gave to King Solomon" so impressed was she with the man himself and his lifestyle.

Today, frankincense and myrrh are still used not only as fragrant substances in cosmetics and perfumes, but for medicinal purposes. I have had a piece of frankincense for years which I keep on my bedside table, sometimes inhaling it before going to sleep. The aroma is sharp and soothing. Used in modern medicine, it can help treat arthritis, diarrhea, asthma, Crohne's disease, and heal wounds.

Burned as incense, frankincense symbolizes prayer rising to the heavens like smoke, while myrrh, which was used for burials, symbolized death. During his crucifixion, Jesus was offered a mixture of wine and myrrh (Mark 15:23) to ease the suffering of

**They took Jesus to a place called Golgotha, which means "The Place of the Skull." There they tried to give him wine mixed with a drug called myrrh, but Jesus would not drink it. Then they crucified him and divided his clothes among themselves, throwing dice to see who would get which piece of clothing.**

**Mark 15: 22–24**

the dying by obliterating or numbing the pain.

Frankincense is mentioned in the Bible from Exodus to Revelation. In Exodus 30, God told Moses to make an altar of acacia overlaid with gold. On it every morning and evening, Aaron would offer fragrant incense made of many spices with pure frankincense seasoned with salt. In Leviticus, grain offerings were to have oil and frankincense on them.

Both myrrh and frankincense are regarded among the most fragrant spices in the lover's garden (Song of Songs) along with nard, saffron, calamus, cinnamon—and all the chief spices, which are not mentioned specifically.

Many others spices we use today were valued in biblical times. Cinnamon (also used as a condiment) and balsam were used in the preparation of holy anointing oil. Cassia (a tropical plant, similar to cinnamon), aloe, and calamus (a tropical palm whose dried roots were also substituted for ginger, cinnamon, and nutmeg) were also used for preparing bodies for burial.

Aloe is talked about as having properties that help wounds heal and aid the reformation of skin. Aloes, which Nicodemus is said to have brought, are made from the leaves of a mixture of aloe plants, also called bitter aloes. It is not the same as aloe, a more commonly known desert plant with spiny leaves. Both words seem to be sometimes used interchangeably.

Aristotle knew that the healing properties of aloe would be invaluable to soldiers wounded in battle, and he advised his student Alexander III (the Great) to conquer all lands that grew it. (It was mentioned by Pedanius Dioscorides, a physician in the Roman army in his encyclopedic Greek herbal De Materia Medica around 75 BC). The healing benefits of aloe were recognized in the ancient Indian, Chinese, Greek, and Roman civilizations. It is traditionally used to heal wounds, relieve itching and swelling, and is known for its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties.

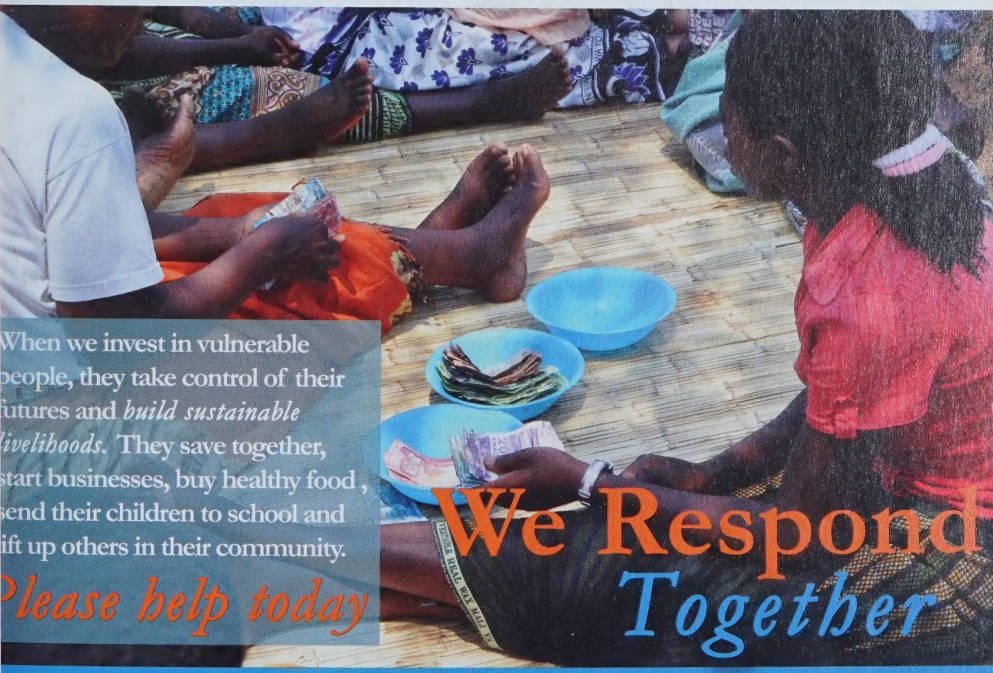
Cedarwood was known in Mesopotamian culture and eucalyptus in Asia. Both these botanicals plus sage have been used in the Western world for a few hundred years for their restorative powers. Aboriginal cultures have used smoking herbs as medicine, sacraments, and offerings since the Ice Age.

The women who came with Jesus from Galilee watched as their Lord's body was taken down and followed after to the sepulcher where his body was laid. They returned home and prepared spices and ointments. "On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them" (Luke.24:1 KJV). Of course, they never got to use the spices.

The Egyptians believed in myrrh's healing powers: they burned it every day as part of their worshipping rituals. In Greek culture, myrrh was an essential part of soldiers' combat gear because of its extremely high antiseptic and anti-inflammatory properties. Myrrh was also used for cleaning wounds and to prevent infection and the spread of gangrene in already infected parts of the body.

Jesus was honoured shortly before his death by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, when she bathed his head and/or feet with an expensive ointment, nard or spikenard (Matthew 26:6-7). When his indignant disciples criticized the waste, Jesus defended her saying she was preparing him for burial. This story, he declared, would be told wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, 'in honour of her'.

Jesus was honoured during his lifetime by a variety of persons, rich and poor, mighty and lowly, friends, family and followers. He was honoured in a stable, in the house of a leper, on a cross and in a cold tomb. Even when he had risen, women were on their way with costly and aromatic spices to honour a man they loved and worshipped. We continue 'in honour of him' to worship Jesus and to endeavour to live life as he preached. We can do no less.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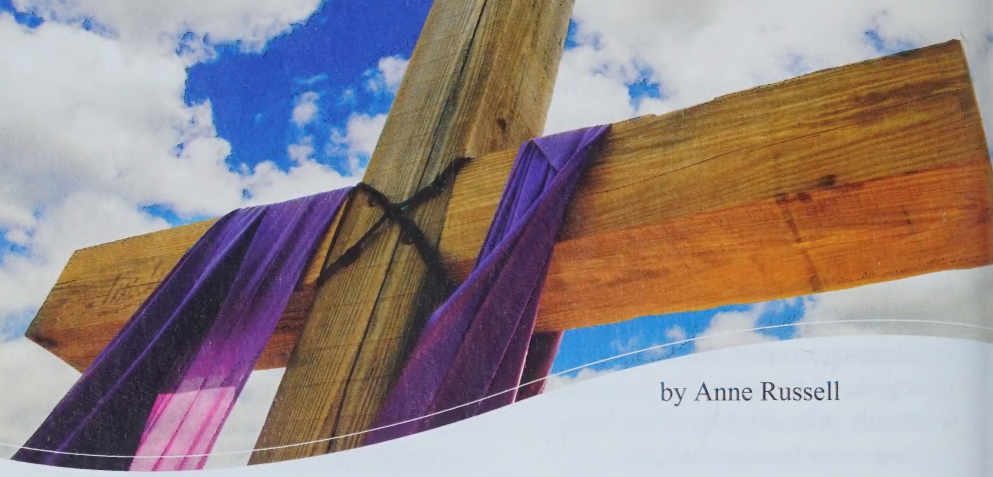


by Anne Russell

# Lenten Devotionals

The following are five devotions for your use during the Season of Lent. I suggest you use the first two any time during Lent, perhaps when you need a break to stop and reflect on your upcoming celebration of Easter. The final three can be used on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Morning.

## My Jesus! My Lord! My Saviour!

Read Romans 10:13

In the year 2000, I travelled to Israel. With a group in the Holy Land, I experienced the steps of Jesus, as we walked his route through Holy Week, starting with Palm Sunday and his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, on to the Upper Room, across the Kidron Valley to the Garden of Gethsemane, then on the painful journey that led through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, finally coming to the Place of the Skull, Golgotha, and the garden where they laid our Saviour in the tomb. The special Sunday service was attended by thousands in the garden that holds the now empty tomb, the tomb that has been empty for over two thousand years.

I look back on the events that took place: the betrayal, the scourging of Jesus, the suffering, and the shame of the cross. Here God took his Son, his one and only Son, and placed all our sins upon him.

At the moment that Christ died on the cross, the earth shook, the rocks split, the heavens were darkened, and the veil of the temple that enclosed the Holy of Holies was torn in two by the hand of God. The now open veil lets us enter into

God's presence to seek and receive forgiveness of our sins so that one day we will come into his presence to live with God in eternity.

What a sacrifice he made! That we might all be moved so deeply that all we can say is "My Jesus! My Lord! My Saviour!"

*Prayer:* Dear Lord, we come to you this day to give thanks for your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. We thank you for your love given so freely to us by your grace and that we can enter into your presence. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

## The Tree

### Read Genesis 2:9

Journeying in different parts of the world, one can look in awe at many different kinds of trees. Out on the west coast of North America grow the great California redwoods—trees that have been there for hundreds of years.

Journeying on into Israel to the Garden of Gethsemane, there are olive trees that are huge. I am told that they are at least two thousand years old.

We can see the great heights of the pines and the tremendous girth of the olive trees. We can turn back in our Bibles to the story of the Garden of Eden, and read how God created these trees for us to use, and to see their beauty upon this earth.

Let us ponder these trees, and the wonders they provide for us. The tree provides shelter in the forest as it stands. When it is cut down, it can also provide food, fuel, paper, building materials, medicine, and more. What an amazing thing, the tree!

Like the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, God took another tree and set it apart for a special reason. He used a tree for our Saviour Jesus Christ to hang upon. With this tree, God gave us the greatest gift of all: our salvation, freedom from sin and death, and life eternal.

1 Peter 2:24a—He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. (NIV)

*Prayer:* O Lord of all creation, we thank you for the tree, and all its beauty to see and feed upon. Thank you for your Son, who made the supreme sacrifice upon the tree for our salvation. In Christ's precious name we pray, giving you all praise and glory, Amen.

## The Stones Will Cry Out (for Palm Sunday)

Read Luke 19:38–40

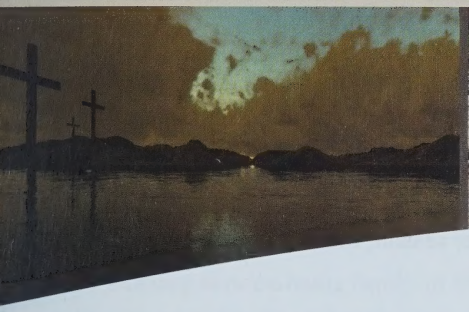
On top of the Mount of Olives, I was handed a branch from a palm tree. It was Palm Sunday, and I was standing looking out over the place where Jesus stood before entering Jerusalem. I stood in awe, thinking back to that day when the King was coming. I closed my eyes, hearing the crowd, and visualizing Jesus sitting on a colt of a donkey, one that had never been ridden.

Can we imagine Jesus riding a colt that had never been ridden? Did the colt react with resentment at this new burden? Or was it hushed in humility, sensing the importance of the occasion and fearing nothing, as Jesus mounted it for his glorious entry into the city, while people spread palm branches and their cloaks upon the ground in the path he was to take?

I was only one of those handed a palm branch, as we made our way down the steep embankment to the road below. We cheered, as did the people of old, waving our branches. It was an emotional time, and I shall never forget how I thought about the Pharisees in the crowd, who pleaded with Jesus to rebuke the disciples!

Jesus replied that there was no way to do that. As his disciples today, we, too, are asked to tell the story to others; for if we do not, the very stones themselves will surely cry out.

*Prayer:* Dear Lord, we give thanks for those who have told the story of the King. We give thanks for his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, and his entry into our hearts where he lives today. May we continue to tell the story to those who have never heard. Help us not to falter or to force the stones to cry out. In Jesus, name, Amen.



## Light Through The Curtain (For Good Friday)

Read Exodus 26:33 and Matthew 27:50–51

One day this winter, I looked out the window, only to see the huge mounds of snow—snow that had not only fallen, but had been piled high by the snowplow. The day was sunny and cold when I parted the curtains in the living room to let the light shine in.

I was reminded of today's scripture verses, one from the Old Testament and the other from the New. Here is depicted the curtain that God had designed, through which the high priest once a year would enter the Most Holy Place.

Now the curtain has been taken away. At the exact time of the death of Jesus, the curtain in the temple was torn in two. What a traumatic time in the history of our Christian faith! When this happened, the earth shook, and huge rocks were split.

The removal of the curtain was a miracle in itself, for none but the hand of God could reach up to the top of the curtain to tear it downward, and open the way for us to pass through. We can now go into the presence of God, not only at the time of our death, but at any time when we pray to the Father through Jesus, who is our one and only mediator.

The way has been made clear for us, just like my opening of the living room curtains to let the sun shine in. We now have Jesus, our light, to shine in our lives, showing us the way to eternal life. There is now no fear of death, for we can easily come to God through the sacrifice of Christ.

*Prayer:* Almighty and gracious Father, you gave your Son Jesus for us, that we might have eternal life. Thank you that we can now come to you through the crucified Christ, the Messiah, in prayer, repentance, and thanksgiving. May the light of Jesus shine through our lives as a sign to others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Remembering His Word (for Easter Morning)

Read Luke 24:6–9a

When I awakened this morning, the sun was just peeking over the roof of the house across the street. During the winter months, I can't see the sun, as it is too far south, but at this time, in the Easter season, the sun slowly edges its way north.

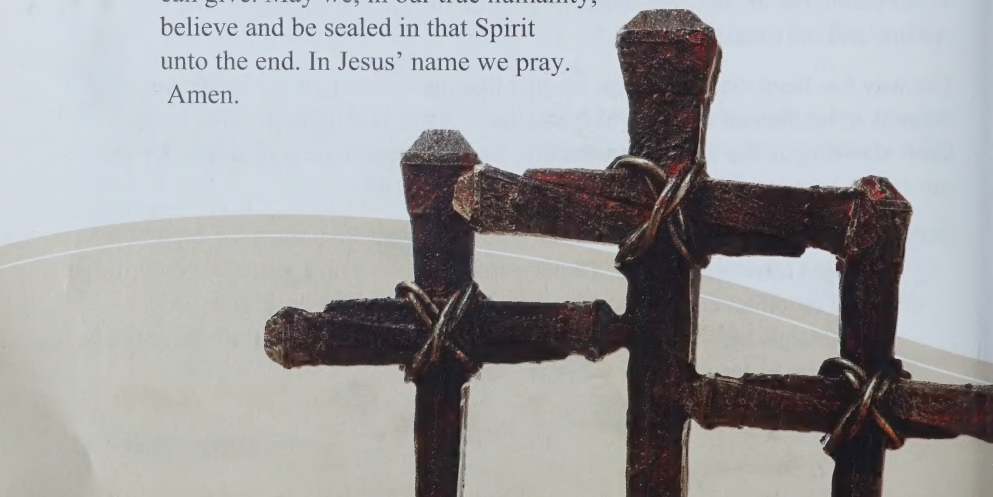
I thought of that morning, which must have been tranquil after the events of our Saviour's suffering and death upon the cross: the morning Christ rose from the tomb.

Here, we have the setting as I see it: bright blue skies with the sun's streaking light, shining upon the earth, giving it warmth. Comparing the light to his countenance and the warmth of the Holy Spirit, we are attuned to a tranquillity that fills our souls. We hear and feel something like the singing breath of the Anointed One. It fills the earth with new life. Here, we can appreciate the warmth of the Holy Spirit living among us.

It is finished! The victory is won! Christ endured the cross to save us from our sin! He conquered death to give us eternal life! He gave his all for us.

Today Christ has risen; remember his words. The Son of man was delivered into the hands of sinful men to be crucified and on the third day Christ rose again.

*Prayer:* Almighty and everlasting Father, we come to you this Easter morning to give thanks for the risen Christ. We feel his warmth brought to us through the Holy Spirit, the Spirit you gave to us when Jesus rose to be at your right hand. Thank you for the sacrifice and the victory only you can give. May we, in our true humanity, believe and be sealed in that Spirit unto the end. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



# Easter Worship

by Rev. John Crowdis

## Brief Introduction

This worship service lands firmly in the celebrations of Easter. After the dark journey through Holy Week, Easter marks the light of new life erupting out of the darkness of death. Yet without Good Friday, Easter alone is meaningless. This service is best used in the early days following Easter Sunday, recalling the experience of the early followers of Jesus who found they were still coping with the awfulness of Good Friday, and yet coming to terms with the news that Christ is risen!

## Call to Worship

Leader: Christ is risen!

**People: Christ is risen Hallelujah!**

Leader: Christ is risen!

**People: Christ is risen Hallelujah!**

Leader: Christ is risen!

**People: Christ is risen indeed! Hallelujah!**

**Hymn:** Alleluia, Alleluia, give thanks #260

## Prayer (unison)

God of new life and hope,
who breathes life into dust,
we gather together as your people,
seeking Easter in our own lives.
We come into your presence,
after a long journey through lent,
impatient for this moment, and yet bogged down
by our own hurts, confusion, and despair.
Yet Easter is upon us, resurrection resounds about us.
You call us out into new life in the way of Jesus.

Hosanna

For this we express our thanks for this great gift,
and may our lives reflect our gratitude,
sharing this new life with others.
We pray in the name of our risen Saviour. Amen.

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:1–10 (NRSV)

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.' This is my message for you." So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

**Hymn:** In the bulb there is a flower #674

**Reflection:** The First Day

Easter's early origins are evidenced by how much the date can bounce around our calendar, because Easter is roughly tied to Passover, and is determined by astronomical observations and calculations. Regardless of the year, Easter always comes on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring

Equinox (usually March 21). This means that Easter Sunday could fall as early as March 22 or as late as April 28. This year Easter is late, falling on April 20, following the first full moon of Spring on Tuesday, April 15.

As much as it may sound like trivia, determining the date of Easter was hugely important for early Christians. They needed this date in order to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, and later commemorate the events of Holy Week. The celebration of new life, and hope in the face of death defined early Christians who would gather on the first day of every week as a mini-Easter.

Very quickly, they needed a way to determine which Sunday would mark the yearly celebration of Easter. Instead of tying the celebration to a fixed date in the Julian Calendar, early Christians felt that Easter would be best celebrated on a Sunday following the Passover, which would begin on the first full moon of Spring. In short, they would look to the skies to determine this day. Remember that this was at a time when the only universal calendar was used by an oppressive power—the Roman Empire. It was not surprising that early Christians made this choice. Other celebrations with fixed dates, including Christmas, would come much later, when Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire.

The celebration of the Resurrection has been there from that first, brightest day. It is why we gather together on Sunday mornings, the first day of the week, as a weekly commemoration of Christ's resurrection. Every Sunday is really a mini Easter. There is no greater or more important celebration in the Christian calendar than this First Day.

It means we don't have to be afraid anymore.

Yet, ironically it's a fearful prospect because it means we need to let go of our way of seeing the world around us. Maybe we've developed a kind of

# Remember

His Love

unhealthy dependency on accepting the way the world is … preferring to complain about it, rather than living as people freed from all of that. It's the reason why, some two thousand years later, the proclamation of the Resurrection is still so incredibly revolutionary. The challenge for us is to be able to let go and to truly embrace the Resurrection so we can take the words of Jesus to heart. That's why we need to hear the story again and again, so that we can learn the truth: We don't have to be afraid anymore.

This is why Easter is the brightest day. To borrow a text that is more commonly read at Christmastime, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined." (Isaiah 9:2) On this brightest day, God calls us to remember what really matters, and to live like it. The light shines. It's not enough to say that Easter is the centre of our faith, Easter is our faith.

Christ is risen, Christ is risen indeed. Praise God! Amen.

### Offering Prayer

Giver of new life,
we are grateful for all that you give us,
especially for the hope of Resurrection.
May the gifts that we offer
find their way to extend your love and hope
to all here on Earth. Amen.

**Hymn:** Now the green blade rises #256

### Litany Prayer

Leader: Loving God, source of all hope,

**People: You are the light that shines in the darkness,bringing life amidst despair and desperation.**

Leader: You are the Easter wind that blows through our lives,

**People: letting us breathe in the new life of the risen Christ.**

Leader: You are the source of our strength and courage,

**People: when all we see and feel is suffering and pain.**

Leader: You call us to live and work for justice and kindness,

**People: standing with the least of these, and experiencing new life together.**

Leader: Help us to renew ourselves in resurrection hope.

**People: Living our lives as people unafraid of death.**

Leader: Holy One, we give you thanks and praise.

**People: For Christ is risen indeed, Hallelujah! Amen.**

Hymn: I danced in the morning #250

Benediction

Leader: Easter is here, let us let go of our fear!

**People: Let us go forth with joy!**

Leader: We celebrate new life for all!

**People: Let us go forth with hope!**

Leader: Let us go this day with the blessing of the risen Christ!

**People: Hallelujah! Amen.**

*The Rev. John Crowdis is a Presbyterian Minister currently serving as Transitional Minister at Knox United Church in Drumheller AB. Ordained in 1997, he has served various congregations and ministries in Ontario and Alberta.*

He is Risen

# WHAT DO YOU SEE?

by Deb Rapport, ARISE Ministry

"Do you like my outfit? How do I look?" she asked my friend and me with a smile one Thursday night as we were doing street outreach. She was young and her fish-net body suit concealed nothing; it merely acted as an agent to showcase the little else she was wearing.

We had met her on "high-track," the prostitution stroll that marks the block in Toronto where the younger and more expensive prostitutes work. They resemble the Hollywood, "Pretty Woman" image; however, real life is nothing like the movies. Their clients are not at all like Richard Gere, and this is no love story. The women who work this stroll are typically pimped; some are trafficked to different cities depending on local events. Many of the women who work on "high-track" will work inside during the winter months and out on the stroll during the warmer months. Street level prostitution accounts for an estimated 5–10% of the sex-trade in Toronto and with the rise of the Internet and smart-phones this number is likely shrinking.

We introduced ourselves to this young woman and offered her an outreach bag, hand warmers, and a bit of kindness. As for her question, we told her she looked nice. What does "I was naked and you clothed me," mean when you are offering outreach and ministry to those involved in the sex trade?

The more I reflect on it, the more I engage in this ministry, the more certain I am that it means looking beyond the nakedness. Looking with eyes of non-judgment and eyes that don't shame and seeing someone for the unique person they are.

It is not seeing them for what they are wearing, the acts they engage in, or any amount of money they receive for these acts, for they are worth so much more than that. The ugly truth is that few other people they meet that night will see them that way. Few other people they encounter that night will see them as human beings with feelings.

Her pimp or trafficker will see her as his meal ticket, and if she gets out of line he'll make sure she knows who's in control. If she is not making enough money, he might move her inside, to a different city, or sell her off to another pimp.

What about her clients, tricks, or dates? The nicer ones are still nothing at all like Richard Gere. They might see her as an a la carte menu for their pleasure. The bad dates will rape her, beat her, and leave her within an inch of her life. Over 75% of those involved in the sex-trade have been raped and/or physically assaulted while working. After years of street-outreach and pastoral care to women involved in the sex trade, I suspect this statistic is actually under-reported. I have heard too many stories about bad dates and seen the trauma and fear in too many eyes. I have listened to the struggle of feeling like nowhere is safe. "Who is really going to protect me if I report it?" "What if he comes back to the stroll?" "What if I never see my kids again?" "I'm scared to know that I could have died that night …."

How do the other girls on the stroll see her? Some will see her as competition and want to know, "how she thinks she earned the right to work their stroll?" Others may feign friendship and exchange pleasantries, knowing that if she gets a bad date it was only by chance that it wasn't them.

Some of the drunken university students out for a night on the town, see her as someone to mock, insult, and deride. They might bump her, push her, or spit on her. "She's worth nothing anyway."

Law enforcement has its own prejudices about her and this has been made even more complicated with changing laws.

The clerk behind the counter at the convenience store only wants no trouble from her.

What about you? What do you see? Do you see some of the injustice and oppression that lead her to stand out on that corner that night? The average age that a person is "turned out" to work in the sex trade is 12 to14 years old. Chances are she was just a child when she was recruited, groomed, and procured. Do you see

how with statistics like this, there is a good chance she never finished elementary school, let alone high school? Do you see how this fact has been manipulated to the point that she now believes that she is not smart enough to ever get a well-paying, "straight" job? Choices can sometimes be made because of a lack of choices.

Do you hear the stories of childhood sexual abuse that have left too many with the belief that sex is all they are good for, and the ways in which too many have "fallen through the cracks?"

The prostitution laws in Canada were struck down in December, with the stipulation that the Supreme Court would give the Government a year to come up with new legislation before the laws are abolished completely. What happens next depends on perspective. What does our Government see? What is it that we as Canadians see as important? How is the sex-trade and sex-trafficking in Canada seen and understood?

Researcher Melissa Farley and her colleagues conducted interviews in five different countries, Canada being one of them, with individuals involved in the sex-trade. They concluded, "Any distinction between prostitution of children and prostitution of adults is arbitrary, and obscures the lengthy history of trauma. The 15-year-old in prostitution eventually turns 18, but she has not suddenly made a new vocational choice."[1]

For the outreach team that ARISE Ministry participates in each week, we are aware that we might be the only people involved in the sex-trade encounter that night who look beyond their nakedness and see their humanity. We might be the only people that night who will offer kindness, dignity, and love. We may well be the only people that those we minister and outreach to encounter all week that see them as children of God, fearfully and wonderfully made.

For our calling to "clothe the naked," is done not merely through meeting the physical needs but by

# Prayer

by Colleen Wood

Loving God,
We are sometimes so quick to judge. We are sometimes so ready to turn the other way. We are sometimes so ready to avoid the areas of our communities where the needs are greatest.

We pray today that you will help us to see what you see. Help us to reach out to the hungry, the thirsty, and the naked. Help us to be present and active in our communities.

clothing people with our love and kindness. It is looking beyond the nakedness and seeing the child of God.

It is our calling to see, love, and serve Christ in those who are hungry, those who are thirsty, those who are strangers, those who are naked, those who are sick, and those who are in prison. It is in seeing, in loving, in serving Christ here, that we see a glimpse of the kingdom of God here and now. It is in so doing that we experience Jesus' presence, God-with-us.

What do you see?

*Rev. Deb Rapport is Director and Community Chaplain for ARISE Ministry, a Mission of the Presbytery of East Toronto. ARISE stands for Advocacy and Reclaiming those Involved in the Sex-trade through Empowerment, and offers a ministry of case management, outreach, and pastoral care to those involved in the sex-trade.*

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[1] Melissa Farley et al., "Prostitution in Five Countries: Violence and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," Feminism & Psychology v.8 no.4 (1998):408

We pray for those involved in the sex trade in Canada. We know that many of these men and women have been let down by the adults in their lives, and by society. Many are young and in need of protection. We pray that as the government moves forward with new laws regarding sex trade workers, that those in need of protection will be protected.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen

# FACE TO FACE

by Jo Morris

For now we see in a mirror dimly but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:12–13

The Canada Youth (CY) event has hit its teenage years! Fourteen and counting! Created in 2000, it is no longer the 'new' initiative of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The events have been taking place every three years since then, but now have moved to every other year. CY, as the events have become known, continues to be a vibrant and innovative ministry, and like most teenagers CY is looking to do something different, something new.

CY is changing. As a response to an expressed need from young adults in The Presbyterian Church in Canada faith community, we are trying something new. CY2014 will take place in July 2014 at Brock University in St. Catharines, ON, and will introduce a brand new track. This new track has been designed to more accurately reflect the needs and concerns of young adults in our denomination. The Discipleship Track is for participants who have graduated from high school and are 25-years old or younger. The Planning Team for the upcoming event have spent significant time examining evaluations and commentary from past CY events and have determined that the needs of young adults could be addressed more fully and with greater intention in a new format. This new track will encourage discovery conversations about vocation, discipleship, spiritual practices, and community connections.

As outlined by the Planning Team, the goals for the Discipleship Track are to:

- provide a place where relevant questions can be asked and explored with pastoral leadership.
- offer tools for discipleship.
- understand call, Biblical knowledge, prayer life, spiritual discipline, and vocational direction in and outside of church.
- reveal the spiritual gifts which have been given by God to each participant.
- foster supportive connections that will continue beyond the conference.

The time after high school and through to mid-twenties is a complicated time for many young people. Making decisions about the future and choosing a direction for education or career is an intricate and most often stressful process. At this point, many young adults are faced with numerous expectations—often many of those are unwritten and unspoken. The Discipleship Track will meet participants in their current time of life. It will seek to engage with young adults, not as "adults–in-the-making" but as young adults as they are. Like so many others, young adults seek a feeling of community and a sense of belonging. They are eager to participate, hungry for spiritual growth, and are ready for

## CY

. . . we're trying something new

. . . we're excited

. . . we build a community

. . . we are disciples of Christ

. . . our friendships last

. . . we want you to be there

. . . it's more often

. . . lives are changing

. . . it's not just for youth

. . . we're all part of the family

. . . we have deep discussions

. . . we take our faith seriously

. . . why we love our Church

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CY

Each day will have some or all of these activities:

- Worship
- Small groups
- Workshops
- Recreation events
- Music
- A little hang-out time
- Prayer
- Curfew groups
- All kinds of conversations
- Laughter
- Praise
- And a few meals.

meaningful participation and sustained involvement. They are seeking the tools of discipleship and a connection with communities of faith. The Discipleship Track will re-imagine what it means to be faithful disciples during this time of transition.

For five days, participants will live and learn together as a distinct community. Daily activities will include keynote sessions and workshops designed to discover that we all follow Jesus in different ways and with different styles. We lead and follow differently. The track will build a community of grace-filled relationships—both peer and mentors. Leadership will come from all walks of life—clergy and lay, professionals and apprentices, full-time, part-time, and volunteers, well-seasoned veterans and keen rookies. All leadership will share a common passion for discovery, learning, community, and change. Discipleship Track participants will be housed together in one of the well-equipped Brock University residences.

Young adults can expect to be inspired and empowered by the new ideas, experiences, and relationships that they will encounter in the Discipleship Track. They can expect to build friendships with other unique and interesting young adults from across Canada. Their participation in this track may well give them a confident and an enthusiastic voice as they discover their own spiritual gifts and grow to a deeper understanding of vocation. Participating in the track will most certainly encourage them to continue

as a connected community within The Presbyterian Church in Canada. But most important, young adults can expect to be encouraged to look more deeply to Christ's call to "Follow me."

This new track is just one of the exciting ways that CY ministers within our denomination. CY is made up of three unique tracks (Youth, Discipleship and Youth Ministry Training). The youth track continues to minister to young people who are in high school, and the Youth Ministry Training track equips adults, volunteer or paid, lay or ordained, in their ministry with young people. Each day, all three tracks will unite as one whole community of more than 500 participants and gather together for worship, meals, and recreation events.

CY intentionally works to create an environment that encourages involvement and connection at the congregational level. Everything that happens at CY is available to congregations in the form of resource material—resources for worship, plenary summaries, workshop materials from all tracks, recreation plans and designs, and leadership lists. All these items will be available after the event. As our Church seeks to welcome and connect with young adults through all their transitions, the material and resources from this new Discipleship Track will be a welcome gift.

CY serves as an example of the vibrancy and vitality of this existing demographic of the Church. We can celebrate the reality that youth and young adults are NOW active, enthusiastic members of the body of Christ. This event is an opportunity for the whole Church to provide top-quality programming, which will enhance the development of responsible participation by youth, young adults, and youth leaders in the mission and work of their faith community.

**CANADAYOUTH2014**

July 7-12, 2014 • Brock University • St. Catharines, ON

**Jo Morris, CY Coordinator**
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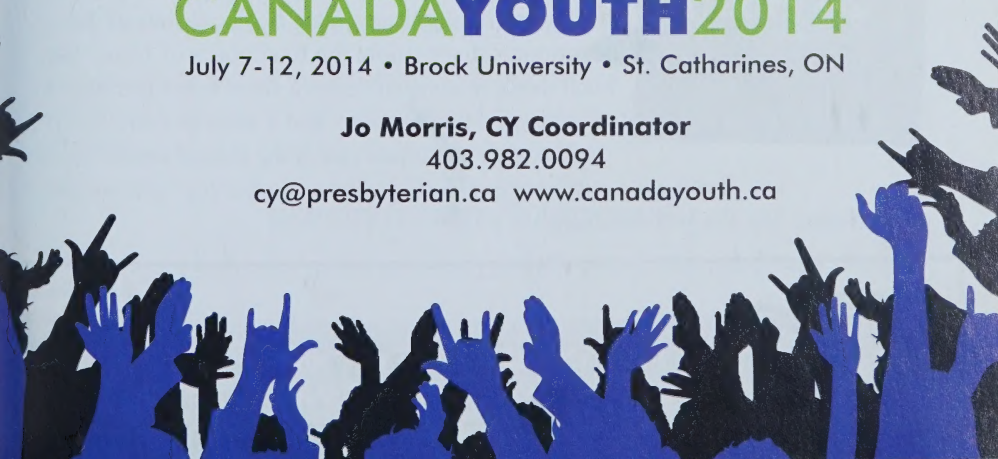
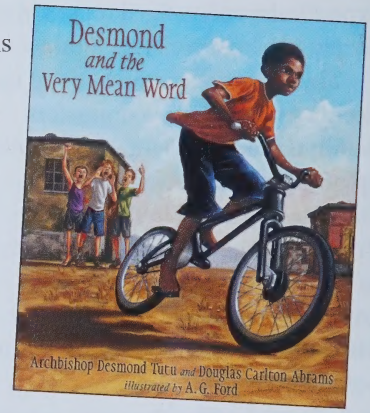


# Book Reviews

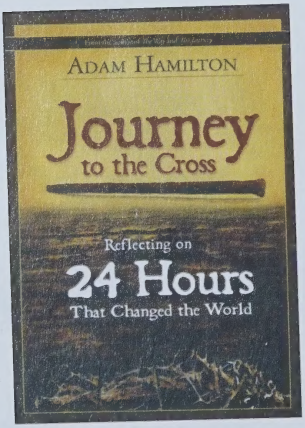
reviewed by Colleen Wood

***Desmond and the Very Mean Word***
by Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams
illustrated by A.G. Ford




This is a marvellous children's story book. It is a story about Archbishop Desmond Tutu—from his life as a boy growing up in South Africa. The story is about a young Desmond, who is called a name by some boys. It makes him angry, and he decides to deal with it by calling them the worst name he can think of. But, of course, this doesn't make him feel any better. In the end, there is healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This book is a wonderful way to celebrate Tutu's legacy.

This book would be a great addition to any family's book shelf, and would be ideal for children ages 4–10. This would also be a great addition to a church's library.




***Journey to the Cross: 40 Devotionals***
by Adam Hamilton

Adam Hamilton is a United Methodist Minister with a wonderful gift of bringing stories to life, but also adding questions or knowledge to those stories. This devotional is based on his third book, 24 Hours, in his trilogy of books about the life of Christ (the other two books are entitled, *The Journey and The Way*). *Journey to the Cross* invites you to take a 40-day spiritual journey. This book consists of 40 devotionals that explore the final hours of Jesus' life. Each day's reading includes a short Bible passage, a reflection on that passage, and a short prayer.

*Note that this is just one of the many Lenten devotionals available at The Book Room. To find the right one for you, contact The Book Room today!*

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# Growing Generosity

"Generosity is constantly cultivated from an overflowing response of gratitude for what God has done for us."

—Walter B. Russell

A beautiful new 3-minute video is available for congregations to help introduce concepts of planned giving and explain the benefits of fostering a spirit of generosity. Use the video during worship to show how we can all make generosity a part of who we are and allow a true spirit of Christian stewardship to take root.

By responding to the call to be faithful stewards to what God has given us, we learn how to live a generous life and enjoy one of the greatest earthly joys there is: the passing of our legacy, knowing it is in good hands.

**presbyterian.ca/pg-video**

Download the video online or order copies from the Planned Giving office

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*provisionaries*

# Mission in Action

**Kenya**
**Rick Allen**

Working in Kenya with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa for the last 20 years as an International Ministries staff person of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, has been very interesting and exciting. Kenya has great diversity, welcoming people, and vibrant Christian and other religious communities. At the same time, security concerns are very real.

Violence in Kenya sometimes makes world headlines. Canadians will remember the tragic September 2013 terrorist attack and hostage-taking at the Westgate Mall in Nairobi. Ethnic or tribal violence erupts from time to time in different parts of the country, resulting in death and displacement. However, these incidents are not typical of the security concerns faced by people each day.

Most Kenyans can tell personal stories of home invasions, muggings, car hijackings, and violence against women. Usually the victims of violence are not seriously harmed, but severe physical attacks do sometimes occur. Poorer Kenyans, especially those living in urban areas, are the most susceptible to violence, as they cannot afford to employ security guards or install house alarms.

High levels of unemployment or underemployment, particularly among youth, are at the centre of the problem. Some young people see the 'good life' as being out of their reach and resort to violence in order to try and obtain it. The solution to youth unemployment is not easy but needs to centre around investment and training programs.

Kenya,of course, is not alone in having problems with local security—similar situations are found in many different countries. My prayer is that with future economic growth and development, these security concerns will significantly lessen.

**Romania**
**Brian Johnston**

Saturday, June 1, 2013, was a very special day for my students.

We had 13 visitors from Knox Presbyterian Church, Waterloo, and I asked them to participate in a special meeting with the students. Each of the Knox members was asked to state their various professions and the special gifts that they have contributed to Knox Church. Then I broke them up into groups of two or three to talk with my students. The students had to speak about their various passions and gifts and how these can be used in their future work as pastors.

The results were good, particularly in their attentive listening to each Canadian's testimony.

One student thanked the Canadians for this special opportunity, "For a long time we have heard about our many Canadian Presbyterian supporters and finally we are meeting them face to face."

May God continue to bless the ongoing connection with our Canadian brothers and sisters.

## Overseas Staff Birthdays

**March**
13 – Todd Statham, Malawi
31 – Michael Tai, Taiwan

**April**
17 – Peter Daniel Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary

**May**
1 – Mio Samuel, Malawi

**Malawi**
**Todd and Annika Statham**

The view from our house in Zomba is so good it should make a missionary feel guilty. Perching like eagles at 1000 metres in elevation, we look down upon the tail end of the Great Rift Valley, which runs down the gut of east central Africa before it grinds to a halt in the Massif of Mulanje, rising up before our eyes to over 3000 metres. It's stunning!

In the rainy season, huge nimbus clouds swell and darken over Mulanje and sheets of rain lash the plain; at night, lightning splits the sky from top to bottom. After the rain storms dry up, and a rainbow might dance over the villages lying at our feet. In the dry season, the heat shimmers and crackles on the plain, and the air grows thick from the dust kicked up by tens of thousands of men walking to work and tens of thousands of women cooking over fires. It's like storybook Africa. Through the thick air, we strain our eyes to see the bulk of Mulanje, 60 kilometres in the distance, or to see the silver blue smudge of Lake Chilwa to its east.

This time last year, we were enjoying the view with a friend who had come over for tea. A local of Zomba, she heads a small organization that reaches out to orphans and vulnerable children. In fact, she had just driven back from the very plain we look down upon from our heavenly vantage. But she found no paradise there. Her report was grim. At the end of the dry season, food was scarce and hunger rampant. Lake Chilwa, a shallow basin fed only by rain, was drying up … and with it the fishing industry that sustains the locals. Many women were forced to turn to prostitution to feed their kids. One story in particular turned our hearts: she came across a few young brothers living together in the ruins of a hut. Their parents had died; they had no clothes apart from what was on their backs; and the elder brother, aged 14, had to drop out of school to try to find some money to feed his kid brothers. He began weeping as he told her this.

From our heavenly view, we saw none of the tragedies being played out beneath us in villages and huts and fields. We knew nothing of the pain and hunger down there. We couldn't feel the fear of an orphan forced to be a father to his brothers. Nor could we hear him weep for the end of his innocence. If we wanted to help, we'd have to descend into the dust and heat of the plain; and there, see, hear, and feel the sufferings of a thousand lives.

During Christmas celebrations, we remember the fact that God does not look down upon us from afar but is, rather, Emmanuel, God with us. "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14). God himself forsook his heavenly view of his world, and in Jesus Christ entered fully and completely into the countless tragedies of our world. He is no stranger to hurt or hunger. He is not deaf to the cries of the broken hearted. God dwells in our world as much as he reigns in heaven. Thank God for aid organizations, and charities, and churches, and projects like "Gifts of Change," and individual Christians, who pursue the path blazed for us by God himself, who in Christ, "descended to the depths…" (Ephesians 4:9).

**Burst Forth**
National Presbyterian Women's Gathering 2014

# ONE DAY REGISTRATION

Did you want to attend The Gathering, but couldn't? Did you hear about it, but had other commitments that weekend? Come and get...a taste of the excitement. For the 2014 Presbyterian Women's Gathering, we are able to accept limited numbers of one-day registrations for Saturday May 17.

**Date:** Saturday, May 17, 2014

**Place:** Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontario

**Cost:** $75.00 (meals not included) Register by March 31, 2014

If you have any questions regarding registration please call 1-800-619-7301 or 416-441-1111 or womensgathering@presbyterian.ca.

Registration forms and more information can be found at womensgathering.ca.

In February, the WMS sent this letter out to WMS groups, Presbyterials, and Synodicals. For those you missed it this informative letter, it is printed below.

**Dear Friends,**
**Re: Presbyterian Church Women (PCW)**

As President of the Women's Missionary Society, I write to you to bring you up to date on a very important decision that was made at Council 2013 by your representatives from across the WMS, that is, the creation of the Presbyterian Church Women's organization. It has come to our attention that information about this proposed new organization has not been reaching the members of the WMS grassroots. This is a very important decision that will potentially affect the WMS and so I am taking this time to share with you the background and vision behind this new endeavour. I hope you will also see and share the vision that has been set by Council for the future of the Women's Missionary Society.

Since 1972, when the WMS gave its overseas mission work to the Church (with the creation of the Board of World Missions) the WMS has been finding new ways to be involved in mission. The main purpose for the WMS has been, and still is, mission. We have done well in keeping mission before the church and fervently studying and praying for missions and missionaries wherever they were in the world. Our members gave generously to mission work and promoted the work of missionaries even if we were no longer sending missionaries ourselves. From our efforts and prayers, the church has benefited tremendously and has expressed gratitude to the WMS in different ways over time.

Today, we see that the Church's mission arms have strengthened and they are carrying out mission work well through organizations like PWS&D, International Ministries and Canadian Ministries. They still, however, need the WMS to continue to keep mission before the Church, and from that end, the WMS has its work cut out for us. We can, and we will, continue to do what we are good at, that is supporting mission work around the world. That continues to be the strength of the WMS.

We noticed one area of weakness, that is, membership. Despite the many efforts of groups trying new things with programming our membership was still decreasing. For at least a decade now, the leadership of the national WMS has been studying, brainstorming, envisioning, and praying about how to increase membership in the WMS. We knew we were doing good things for the mission of the Church but why were we not attracting new members?

About seven years ago, a survey was done with questionnaires to all local groups across the country. In it we asked the grassroots members of the WMS what their thoughts were about change and future vision for the WMS. We received over 350 responses from a potential 500. The majority indicated they wanted change but they did not know how. The leadership of the national WMS decided to try a National Women's Gathering to have an opportunity for the women of the PCC to come together for a time of renewal and fellowship. It was an overwhelming success with over 560 women in attendance. The evaluations from the Women's Gathering in 2011 indicated that the women were overjoyed to have had the opportunity to be with hundreds of women. Many indicated that they could hardly wait for the next Women's Gathering. For the leaders, this was a positive sign that the women of our church were thirsting and perhaps wanting a national women's organization.

About four years ago, Council Executive created two task forces: the Futures Task Force and the Finance Task Force. Each task force was given the mandate to look into finding out the situation at the grassroots and for finding a vision for the future of the WMS. Through the task forces, the synodical presidents were asked to contact their local groups to learn about the situation in their areas. What were their wishes and their struggles? The Finance Task Force was mandated to look specifically at the financial trend of the WMS over the past ten years with regard to the free-will offerings that the grassroots were giving. With reports from both task forces, Council Executive held several meetings over a span of about three years. In 2013 it made recommendations to Council, the highest decision-making body within the WMS. Delegates to this Council meeting, sent by the synodicals, were given several months notice that these important decisions would be coming up for a vote at the Council meeting. They were instructed to consult their synodicals for input and direction on the vote. Council passed the recommendations of Council Executive with a majority vote. The recommendations that passed were as follows:

1. That Council be held every two years starting in 2013.
2. That a new umbrella organization called the PCCW (Presbyterian Church in Canada Women) be created with the WMS, the Women's Gathering, and new groups as part of its structure.
3. That the vision/purpose of the newly organized organization be "To celebrate and nurture Christian living for all women of the Presbyterian Church."

The name "Presbyterian Church in Canada Women" (PCCW) was chosen but later it was felt that this was too long and at the fall Council Executive meeting it was recommended that it be changed to "Presbyterian Church Women" (PCW).

These recommendations were taken to General Assembly in June 2013 for approval in principle. There was not much time between the Council meeting in May 2013 and General Assembly which was just a few weeks after. And so, initially Council did not think to report this to General Assembly in 2013. However, it was realized that waiting until General Assembly of 2014 would mean the initial work to start the organization could not get underway. Until Assembly approved in principle, we did not think that we could even approach congregations across the country, including the Atlantic, to consider starting new groups. In the end, General Assembly sent the recommendations back to the WMS for more work and report back later.

Shortly after the November Council Executive meeting a delegation went to Truro, Nova Scotia, and met with women from the Atlantic Mission Society (AMS) and the Atlantic Synod to inform them about the PCW and to invite their participation. It was a good meeting with lots of discussion and good fellowship. The outcome was that the women who met indicated their desire to be part of the new organization. The meeting was generally positive and it was felt that a new potential bonding and networking of Presbyterian women across the country was possible.

The same group that visited the Atlantic is planning to go out to other parts of the country with the intention of meeting with as many of the grassroots WMS as possible within the next year. Currently, the following locations and dates are confirmed:

CNOB Synodical Executive meeting — February 24 in Toronto

Southwestern Ontario Synodical meeting — April 22 in St. Catharines

British Columbia Synodical meeting — March 18-19 in Vancouver

Calgary McLeod Presbyterial meeting — March 22 in Calgary

Saskatchewan WMS meeting — March 24 in Saskatoon

Edmonton-Peace River Presbyterial — March 26 in Edmonton

Please try to attend one of these information-sharing meetings near where you live. You can also get information about the PCW on the WMS website (www.wmspcc.ca) for future developments.

If you have any questions or concerns about the creation of the PCW please contact myself (bettysiverns@gmail.com) or Sarah Kim (skim@presbyterian.ca). We are interested in hearing your views and furthering discussions with the grassroots of the WMS who are the backbone of the national WMS.

In Christ,
Betty Siverns, President

# In the Society

## Presbyterial

**Huron-Perth** Presbyterial held their Fall Rally on November 4 at St. Mary's Presbyterian Church. On arrival, 41 members were welcomed with coffee and muffins by the Goderich Arthur Circle WMS. Rev. Gwen Ament, brought greetings to those gathered. A short service of worship was followed by our speaker, Lillian Rowe, who told us about her trip to Uganda where she visited a Baby Respite Centre. It was a very touching story indeed. Ethel Corry gave a short review of new books available and a brown bag lunch was enjoyed by all. The afternoon session began with a sing-song of favourite hymns, led by Shirley Aitcheson, with Lois Kipfer on the piano.

Nancy Vermond, our afternoon speaker, spoke about, 'Grandmothers to Grandmothers', an organization dedicated to raising funds to assist grandmothers in African countries devastated by AIDS. The grandmothers have taken on the responsibility of raising their grandchildren since the parents are now deceased. Anyone who is a grandparent can imagine how difficult this would be, especially when dire poverty is a fact of daily life.

After greetings, reports, and announcements, this interesting day ended with courtesies and a closing prayer, offered by Willy Drost.

Missionaries "R" Us was the theme for the **Maitland** Presbyterial Annual Meeting held on January 20 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Wingham.

After the meeting was constituted and the WMS purpose recited, the Rev. Bernie Skelding gave greetings with reference to greetings from the Bible.

Our very special guests were Kathy and Tim Whatly. Tim is Executive Director of New Tribes Mission in Durham. Tim and Kathy and their three children lived among the Moi People (a tribe in Indonesia that lived in fear of evil spirits). Kathy and Tim learned the Moi language

and translated the Bible into the tribal language so they could share the love of Christ. They taught the tribe to read and write in their own language so they could share the good news among their tribe members. The Moi people have shared with other tribes who want to know more about their changed lives.

A delicious lunch was served by the St. Andrew's Church Women's Auxiliary and the business portion of the meeting followed. The new executive for 2014 was installed.

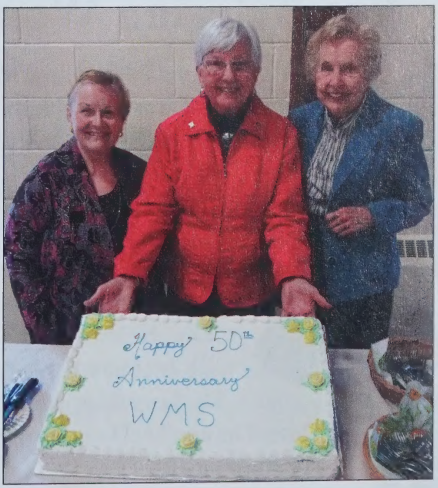
**Barrie** Presbyterial sponsored 'A Day Apart' on October 19 at St. Andrew's Church, Barrie. The theme was "The Benefits of Camel Hair" referencing John the Baptist being a prophet. After a prayer, welcome, and sing-along, the Rev. Karen Horst led a workshop on prophets. Everyone participated in a discussion of what is a prophet, what are their qualities, why they are often rejected, and whether there any prophets today. Karen, as a radio show host, led a "Prophetic Interview" with the three major and the twelve minor prophets of the Bible. The prophets were portrayed by many of those attending the meeting and were dressed for the part.

We then moved on to modern day prophets like Mother Teresa. Each group had to choose one and write a song about them to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star. Throughout the day we did prophet activities, such as a word search, word scramble, and making a graffiti poster.

A delicious lunch of soup, sandwiches, and sweets was provided by the St. Andrew's ladies, and the day was made complete with the Rev. Karen Horst conducting a service of communion.

## Local

The WMS of **Trinity Presbyterian Church**, Toronto ON, celebrated their 50th Anniversary on Sunday, November 24 during the worship service. Rev. Ferne Reeve, minister of Trinity, led the service. We were pleased to have a number of our former members join us. During the service, one of our original members highlighted the work of the WMS ladies both in our church and in the church at large. Through the quiet



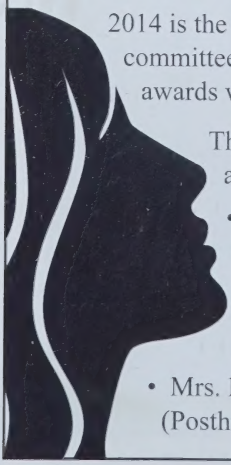

**The three women with the cake are from left to right Janet Bray, Noreen Marshall, and Dorothy Hunter. Noreen and Dorothy are the only original members still in our group.**

unassuming dedication of these ladies to their Lord, Trinity Church, plus the church at large, has been blessed over the years.

Helen Green was an active member of Knox Presbyterian Church, the **Dr. Margaret Strang WMS Auxiliary**, and the DOTS (Dunnville's Own Tiny Stitches), Dunnville's quilting guild. When she died in December, 2012, her family offered the guild all the small pieces of fabric which were left in her boxes. The guild then had an idea. For the next few months, each member of the guild was given a small bag of scraps with the assignment that they were to make something with them, add something of their own, and if possible, add something green, and then to offer the results to Knox Presbyterian Church to sell at their Fall bazaar in memory of Helen. This in fact is what they did. From wall hangings, table runners, purses, lap throws, and mug rugs, a beautiful array of quilted items represented this generous gift of creativity, and enabled the small WMS group at Knox church to meet their annual allotment.

**Carol Beamer and Mary Lou Johnston with just some of the many quilted items made from Helen Green's scraps. There were many bigger items too.**

# Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award



2014 is the inaugural year of the Women of Faith Award and as such the committee felt it was appropriate to honour more than one woman. Six awards will be presented this year.

The Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award Committee would like to announce their 2014 award recipients:

- Dr. Pauline Brown, India/Canada
- Mrs. Helen Macdonald, St.Andrew's Presbyterian Church Orillia, C
- Rev. Helen Smith, Centennial Presbyterian Church, Calgary, AB
- Dr. Margaret Taylor, St.Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Kitchener, C
- Dr. Lois Klempa, Beaconsfield, Quebec (Posthumously)
- Mrs. Doreen McDougall, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Ottawa, ON (Posthumously)

# Remembering

Nancy Currie
Calvin Presbyterian
Ladies Guild
Abbotsford BC

Rita Tanner
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian WMS
Barrie ON

Heather Miller
Evening Group
First Presbyterian
Edmonton AB

Betty Burns
Knox WMS
Guelph ON

Madeline Elms
Bessie MacMurchy
Knox Presbyterian
Listowel ON

Margaret LeSauvage
Hamilton Road
(Margaret Ramsey Group)
St. George's Presbyterian
London ON

Isobel McKeown
Drummond Hill
Presbyterian Church
Niagara Falls ON

Verna Barrette
St. Andrews Presbyterian
Women
Scarborough ON

Joyce Brunton
Carolyn Fraser
Irene Mayhew
Westminster
Presbyterian WMS
Smiths Falls ON

Millie Sherwood
Wilma Whitelock
St. James Presbyterian
Stouffville ON

Elizabeth McKichan
Knox Centre Road
Presbyterian
Strathroy ON

Gladys Glover
Lakeview Presbyterian
WMS
Thunder Bay ON

Mrs. Marion Pellow
Campbell Aux. WMS
Knox Presbyterian
Woodstock ON

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Women's Missionary Society, and the Order of Diaconal Ministries established this award to recognize the courageous and faithful work of women within our church. Nominations were received from across the church.

The purpose of the award is to honour the breadth of women's ministry within The Presbyterian Church in Canada, share individual stories of women in ministry and recognize "pioneer" or ground breaking ministries in our church.

The awards will be presented at the National Women's Gathering Sunday Banquet on May 18. Registration is still open for the National Women's Gathering. For more information, please visit www.womensgathering.ca.

# Burst Forth

## Isaiah 35:1–10

National Presbyterian
Women's Gathering

DATE: May 16–19, 2014

PLACE: Sheraton Parkway Hotel, Richmond Hill, Ontario

REGISTRATION FEES: $450 for Full Registration, $75 for One Da
Registration (Sat. May 17, 2014) due March 31, 2014

INQUIRIES:
womensgathering@presbyterian.ca
416-441-1111 or
800-619-7301 ext. 321

FOR MORE
INFORMATION VISIT
womensgathering.ca

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Please report any errors/changes in address

Vol. I JULY - AUGUST, 1925 No. 1

# THE GLAD TIDINGS

"And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." Luke 8:1.

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15.

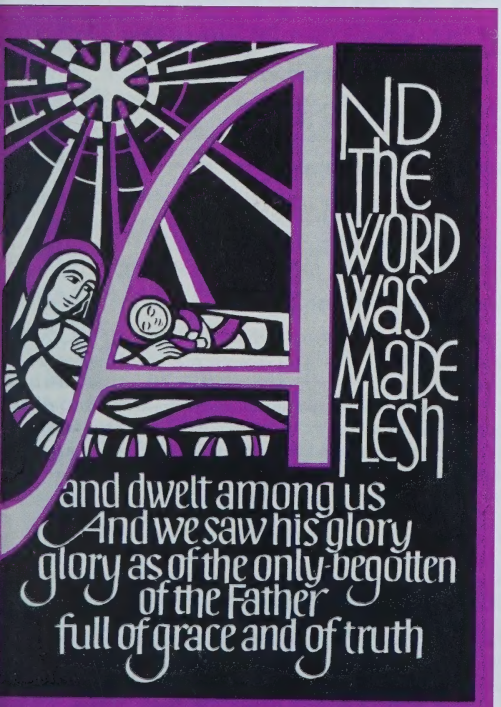
The Presbyterian Women's Missionary Society W.D. Toronto

MARCH 1968

# GLAD TIDINGS

—Newmarket Era

*Special features on "Mission", Overseas students in Canada, and human interest stories from missionaries in Japan, Formosa, India and Canada, contained in this issue.*


AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH
and dwelt among us
And we saw his glory
glory as of the only-begotten
of the Father
full of grace and of truth

GLAD TIDINGS

DECEMBER 1989

May/June 2014

Women's Missionary Society
100th Anniversary Edition

**26 Maternal and Child Health Among Canada's Aboriginal Peoples** by Linda Patton-Cowie

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Glad Tidings

**May/June 2014**

**Volume 90, No. 3**

**EDITOR:** Colleen Wood

**DESIGN:** Alexis McKeown

**CIRCULATION:** Alana Martin

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Canada

*Glad Tidings* reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

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# Editorial

Reading the Women's Missionary Society 75th Anniversary Service that was printed in the January 1989 *Glad Tidings*, I was struck by the words in the benediction, "God grant us courage and imagination, vision and strength, and compelling love." What powerful words. Those words are words we need to hear today. (You can read the entire service on p. 22)

For me, my courage comes from God. Whether it is the courage to face my fears, the courage to start something new (and face the possibility of failure), or the courage to endure, God is with me. It is through the strength that my God provides that I am able to have courage to face most new situations. It is in knowing that God is in control that I can give up control, something I struggle with constantly! Yet, God knows what my future holds and his faithfulness has been proven throughout my life and in the history of God's people.

God also is the God of our vision. God was with the Israelites in captivity in Egypt and he gave them the vision (and the courage) to escape to a new land. God was with Paul as he blinded him and gave him a new vision for his future. God was with the adulterous women, providing her with the forgiveness she needed to begin a new life. God has been with the WMS throughout their history. He gave them a vision to "encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship." As we look to the future, God will continue to guide our vision.

Finally, our God is the God of love. God loves each of us and calls us to love others. For 100 years (150 in some areas), the WMS has showed God's love to others. 100 years and so many fed, clothed, prayed for, visited, evangelized, welcomed, and educated. As we move forward, I pray that our passion, dedication, and commitment will find a way to shine and thrive into the future.

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)

# Office Tales

by Katherine Allen

While working for the Women's Missionary Society for 40 years, I experienced many changes in both staffing and how the work was accomplished. In my early years, I remember standing around the tea pot on my afternoon break listening to stories of previous office staff and the work that the WMS was involved in—change had been constant. I heard stories about the women who were pioneers in their work in various mission fields across Canada and overseas. I immediately felt part of the organization, and sometimes others would forget that I had only joined them in the summer of 1972.

How did I end up working for the WMS? The first step was likely during my last year in Canadian Girls in Training. Lois Powrie was doing a workshop in the area, and her, along with our minister at the time, inspired me to consider work in the church. Then one day at a Spring Rally that my mother (she was a very active WMS member and served as Girls' Work Secretary for Barrie Presbyterial) was attending, Mabel Booth was speaking. At that time she was working in the WMS office as National Secretary for Children's Work. They both knew one another from growing up at Riverdale Presbyterian Church in Toronto. Mabel, of course, asked about the family. My mother told her that my goal was to move to Toronto to work in an office as a secretary. Mabel told her there was an opening in the office and that she had a small apartment in her

WMS Annual Council meetings 1945 and 2001

house (where I ended up living for three years).

I was interviewed by Louise Reith, who was Executive Secretary at the time, and got the job. I started on July 18, 1972. The rest is history!

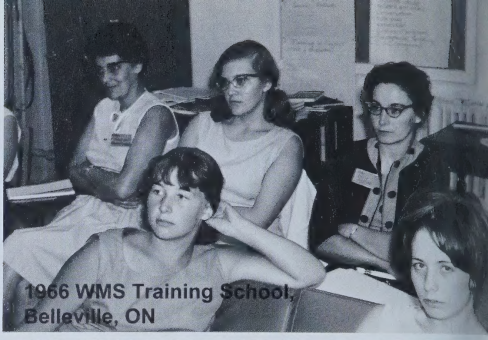
When I started in the office, there was a staff of 13 people. The staff included three in *Glad Tidings* (editor, secretary, and circulation manager), three in finance (assistant to the treasurer, bookkeeper, and secretary), The Book Room manager, two people in children's work (Mabel Booth and her secretary Edith Ross), Executive Secretary Miss Louise Reith, May Nutt, Adult Program Secretary, and myself.

At that time, the WMS office was located on the second floor of 50

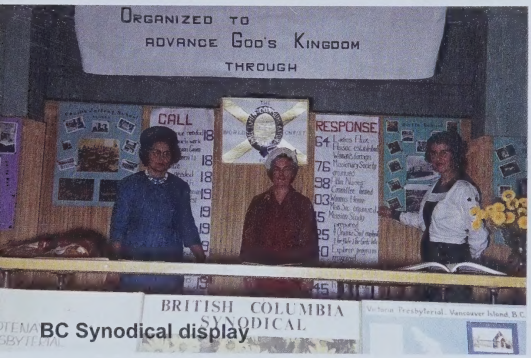
**WMS office, 1960s**

**WMS Staff, 1992, Judy Lee, Katherine Allen, Dorothy Ruddell, May Nutt, Barbara Woodruff, Jeanette Whynotte, Marion Lefauvre, June Stevenson, Lois Powrie**

Ewart College



1966 WMS Training School, Belleville, ON




BC Synodical display

WMS 100th in Montreal

Wynford Drive, where the Life and Mission Agency North and Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) offices now sit. At that time, it was considered the main floor since the entrance to the building was on that floor. The offices were bright with the sunlight that streamed in through the windows along one full wall. We also had our own board room with a horseshoe shaped table, which was the subject of conversation on many occasions. Later, in the 1990s, we were moved to the third floor where the WMS currently continues.

I began as a secretary to Miss Louise Reith and May Nutt. We often heard laughter coming from Miss Reith's office as she and May would chuckle over a story or funny incident. Around 1978, Miss Reith retired and May took on the position of Executive Secretary. The position of Adult Program Secretary was taken over by Barbara Woodruff, who was a great story teller. Often, in the afternoon, she would come out of her office and decide we all needed a stretch from sitting over our typewriters (eventually computers). We would enjoy her stories of work or family over a brief tea break.

In 1993, May Nutt retired from the WMS office after working with the Presbyterian Church since the 1960s. I learned a lot from May, including crocheting! Not long after I started working in the office, I wanted to learn how to crochet. To begin with, the office hours for the WMS were 8:45 a.m. to 4 p.m. So one day at 4 p.m., I went into her office and closed the door. She produced

the crochet needle, and I started to crochet. The national office had a caretaker at the time so he opened the door slightly and removed the garbage can. The other secretary, who was still sitting at her desk, thought he was interrupting something important such as the dictation of a letter! Tam Corbett became the new executive secretary after May Nutt retired.

In 1979, Lois Powrie came into the office as National Secretary for Youth and Children. I eventually worked with her as well as May Nutt until 1985. The WMS was very involved with groups such as Mission Bands (later called Children of the Church), Explorers, and Canadian Girls in Training. I remember when the responsibility for children and youth work was transferred to the Life and Mission Agency (sometime in the 1990s, if I recall correctly).

When I began, the WMS Book Room was located in the same area as the WMS offices on the second floor. They sold mainly mission resources such as the mission study, WMS resources, and other books that people in the church would be interested in. The national church had their own book room called Presbyterian Publications, which closed around 1985 when their resources were picked up by the WMS Book Room. Over the years The Book Room has expanded a great deal. They moved to their current location around the same time as the WMS office was moved to the third floor.

The first Book Room manager

## Historical Tidbits

**The WMS motto "The World for Christ" was adopted in 1883, and the WMS issued membership certificates for the first time that year.**

**In 1916, the first study book for use in the society was prepared by Mrs. J MacGillivray.**

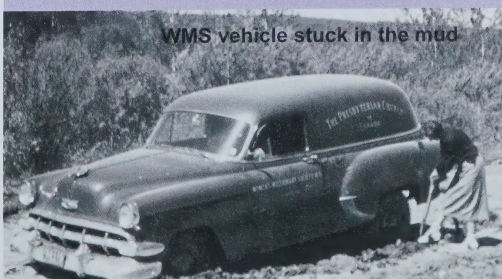
**From 1916 to 1919, the WMS was instrumental in the formation of the Women's Inter-Church Council in Canada.**

**Before the 1925 Church Union, the WMS was composed of 3 515 branches with a total membership of 99 716 and a staff of about 240 workers. After church union, the membership of the WMS was 41 533.**

**In 1925, the WMS became an independent organization of the church.**

**In 1946, synodicals were formed to take the place of provincial societies.**

**Laura Pelton, who worked as Overseas Missions Secretary for the WMS, was the driving force for beginning the mission work in Nigeria.**



WMS vehicle stuck in the mud

was Norma (McComb) Mather. She worked with the WMS from the 1960s until around 1975 when she left to get married. Norma was great for organizing pot luck dinners or going out to a Chinese Restaurant downtown after work, especially on payday. Sometimes there would be eight of us enjoying the meal together, and if one of the women missionaries was home Mary Whale would always invite them to join us.

When I started in the WMS office, *Glad Tidings* staff consisted of Millie Preston (secretary), a circulation manager, and the editor. When Millie left, the job of secretary and circulation manager was combined, and Isabel Brown worked in that position until around 1986 when I took over. I worked with June Stevenson from 1986 until the time she retired in 2004. When I first started working with *Glad Tidings*, computers were just starting to come into the office. I sometimes helped with the layout of the magazine, which was done in the office before sending it to the printers, and also did the job of circulation manager (overseeing the subscriptions for the magazine).

What I really enjoyed about working with *Glad Tidings* was attending the Canadian Church Press (CPP) Annual Event. It was a good opportunity to meet others responsible for circulation from their respective magazines and to get ideas from attending the workshops. June was very involved with the CPP and at one time served as their president. She was very encouraging and helpful to people who wanted to write creatively.

In 1996, my job changed to include general office work, and my title was office secretary and circulation manager. I worked closely with June Stevenson (editor), Charlotte Brown (executive secretary), and Margaret Robertson

(program secretary). Eventually my title changed to administrative assistant and circulation manager, which it remained until I retired at the end of August 2012.

During the 40 years that I worked for the WMS, I had the wonderful opportunity to meet very dedicated Christian women from across Canada, and mission staff and partners from around the world. Particularly during the 1970s and early 80s, I was inspired by hearing the stories of the mission staff who worked overseas. If they were home on furlough, the Board of World Mission made sure they were scheduled to attend the WMS Council meeting, often as observers to help them become more aware of the work of the WMS, and one night was set aside as a "meet the mission staff" time. It was wonderful to meet such dedicated people as Margaret Kennedy, Margaret Leask, Irene Stringer, Diana Wadsworth, Pauline Brown, Doreen Morrison, and Mavis Hyndman. (I could list many more names, but that might fill up the whole magazine.)

I also had the opportunity to meet many mission partners. Receptions are often held at the national church office for visitors to the building from partner churches overseas. It was a great opportunity to meet people and hear how The Presbyterian Church in Canada is working with them. One year I remember the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland visited the office. I think it was around 1997, and I wrote a small news item about it

**During the 1950s and 1960s, the WMS put a lot of emphasis on leadership training. Training teams visited all the presbyterials. In the 1960s, the WMS had training centres that were held at Albert College in Belleville.**

**Before all the offices moved to 50 Wynford Drive in 1966, the WMS staff worked out of 100 Adelaide Street.**

**In 1968, the WMS (WD) and WMS (ED) entered into talks about amalgamation. There was even talk about amalgamating the *Presbyterian Message* and *Glad Tidings*.**

**The Presbyterian Church in Canada did have at one time a department called Presbyterian Men.**

Lois Klempa and Rosemary Doran, authors of *Certain Women Amazed Us*

WMS Celebrates 50 years (bottom right) and 75 years

for *Glad Tidings* that was also included in the *Presbyterian Record*. Because I had been to Ireland a few years before that, I was given the opportunity to give the moderator's wife a tour of the offices, and Margaret Robertson and I sat down with her to share about women in the Church.

Around the year 2000, the Rev. Sarah Kim and Alexis McKeown began their work with the WMS. When I retired, the WMS staff consisted of a staff of seven, three of these part-time, including the Editor of *Glad Tidings*, Colleen Wood.

Certainly in this work, you realize how connected we all are. I worked with Lois Powrie, and my mother worked with her father at the old T. E. Eaton store located in downtown Toronto. They also grew up on the same street in Toronto and both attended Riverdale Presbyterian Church on Pape Avenue. My mother served on Council from May 1979 to May 1984 as Editorial Chair, just before I became staff person for *Glad Tidings*. (I remember June telling me a story about my mother falling asleep at the Council Executive meeting and June having to wake her up to present the editorial report.) Over the years, I have heard stories of other connections and made even more.

Reflecting on the 100 years of work of the Women's Missionary Society, and 150 years of the other societies, it is inspiring to read how many Christian women have put their faith into action, reaching out to the community through the church. Let us hope that the church will continue to grow and explore what the next part of our journey will be. Let us remember the courage and strength of the people who have gone out into the mission field in Canada and overseas to help others. I am blessed to have been a part of the WMS. Long ago, Mrs. Chrissie Newstead, before she became president of the WMS, said, "we are all missionaries." Those words have guided me throughout my Christian life.

*Katherine Allen is enjoying her retirement through travel, live theatre, photography, genealogy work, and friends. She is still involved with the WMS as Recording Secretary for Central Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda Synodical and President of East Toronto Presbyterial. She is also on the board for the Flemingdon Community Mission and a member and secretary of the Ontario Presbyterian Chorus.*

**The WMS was one of the main employers of deaconesses who graduated from the Deaconess and Training School later called Ewart College.**

**In 1971, there was discussion of moving some of the financial responsibility for employing "women" missionaries over to the Board of World Mission. This change officially took place in 1972.**

**In 1973, discussion about changing the name of *Glad Tidings* resulted in keeping the magazine name.**

**The use of inclusive language, Mission Awareness Sunday, and twinning were all new programs for the WMS in 1996.**

**In 2002, the book, *Certain Women Amazed Us: The Women's Missionary Society, Their Story, 1864–2002* by Lois Klempa and Rosemary Doran was released.**

**The WMS launched its first web site in 2005.**

**In 2014, the WMS celebrates its 100th Anniversary!**

# *Women Missionary Society*

*A group of women from across Canada reflect on their personal journey with the Women's Missionary Society*

## Me and the WMS

by Druse Bryan

Compared to many of my friends in the Women's Missionary Society, I was a late starter. I came to Canada in my late twenties, my faith having been nurtured in the Methodist church. Once here, it took me some years to find a worshiping community where I was comfortable and yet challenged. In those early years in this church, the one that I still attend 50 years later, my faith was coasting rather than growing. Looking back, probably many of my beliefs and ideas of what it meant to be a Christian dated back to what I learned in Sunday school and the youth group.

It was attending a WMS presbyterial meeting that changed that! I had agreed to attend at the urging of a friend whom I respected and who had a tighter hold of her faith than I myself had. From the start I felt a kinship and a real connection to these women. With the emphasis that was placed on education, bible study, participatory worship times, I was finally challenged to discover what it was that I believed, and I was learning to share my faith with others. Many of the Bible studies were prepared by both lay and diaconal women and provided me with new insight and a strengthening of my faith.

This was happening in the years when women were slowly being permitted to take part in the life of the church, to serve on national committees, to be ordained as elders and to Word and Sacrament, and many found that the experience previously

gained within the society was extremely helpful. I was no exception. It was, and still is, exciting to meet and talk with others who have expertise and opinions which help me to grow in my faith and my understanding of what God might have me do in my life.

The commitment to mission is a big factor in my involvement in the WMS and it was in the society that I understood that mission to others happens right where I am, as well as off in some other corner of this broken world. I have been extremely fortunate in have been given the opportunity by the WMS to travel to some of these corners both here at home and away. I have returned with the knowledge that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ and one in the Spirit. The strength and conviction of many of the Christians that I met was inspiring and at the same time also humbling. I was forced to think of how I would react under their living and working conditions. Here there is no danger in being a practicing Christian and we take it for granted. In many of these same corners of the world this is not the case and it is their faith which keeps them strong and provides them with the sustenance to continue.

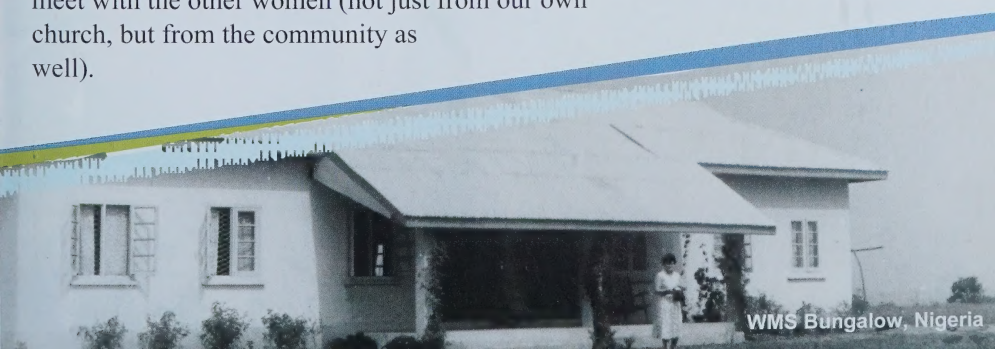
In summary, the WMS has been the single most important factor affecting my connection to God and my desire to grow in God's purpose for me. This does not negate the many other experiences which have shaped my faith, but I know and acknowledge that the WMS influenced me greatly and for that I give heartfelt thanks.

*Druse Bryan is a past national president of the WMS.*

## Growing

### by Kim Shepherd

I have been a member of the Women's Missionary Society for four years. When I attended my first meeting, I have to admit I was feeling lost in my journey of faith. After that first meeting, I started attending regularly and now find myself looking forward to the first Tuesday of every month so that I can meet with the other women (not just from our own church, but from the community as well).



WMS Bungalow, Nigeria

I have learned so much about mission, not only in our own country, but also from around the world. I have heard about local programs for children that I did not even know existed; for example, a local school has a Breakfast for Learning Program.

I was always the one who would sit at the back and watch from afar. I would hold up the wall before talking with anyone. The WMS has brought me out of my comfort zone: I am now a co-leader of one of our groups, and I am getting more and more comfortable speaking in front of adults about our Lord and his work in the community and around the world. I have recently found myself taking on a more active role in our church, which I do credit to the WMS. They have provided encouragement and resources.

Prayer was another subject that I was not at all comfortable with. It is funny, but my answer to anyone who asked me to say a prayer was, "I am sorry, but I don't know how to pray." It wasn't until I was speaking with two of the facilitators at the Presbyterian Women's Gathering that I realized that I had been praying without even knowing I was actually praying. Now I encourage my own family and my two children to pray. No matter how small or casual the prayer is they are talking with the Lord. I am very thankful to all the women who have touched me and encouraged me to open up with the Lord through prayer, scripture, and song.

My faith has grown so much from my involvement in the WMS. From the monthly study (or speaker), spending time with the other members, attending the Presbyterian Women's Gathering, and reading *Glad Tidings*, I have grown in my faith and as a person. I have witnessed God's work in so many ways and learned that he is always with us and continues to walk with us.

My wish now, and part of my daily prayer, is that younger women come out to the WMS and watch their own faith journey grow. That they learn as much as

Council 2005: Nancy Mille
and Eunice Bisset

I have, especially about our missionaries and the many lives they have touched.

*Kim Shepherd attends St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Brampton, with her husband and two children. She is an active member of the St. Andrew's Pringle WMS and involved in leadership with the congregation's Family Ministry and Vacation Bible School.*

## Changing Times

by Betty Siverns

The Women's Missionary Society has offered different experiences for me at different times in my life. As a young mother, it was a pleasant opportunity, away from the demands of four children and a busy student-minister husband, to get to know the other women in our congregation and learn about the work of the WMS. That is to say, it served a social dimension.

In more recent years, the WMS provided me the opportunity and encouragement to learn new skills in a supportive and friendly environment. I have had opportunities to serve a national organization, have travelled to places I had only read about, and have met people from around the world. The women I have had the privilege of getting to know and work with on various committees have taught me much about listening and understanding others' points of view. I have also learned more than I ever wanted to know about how the national church functions. Representing the WMS on national church committees has been an enlightening and rewarding experience.

The most important thing the WMS has done for me is to keep me aware of and concerned for the poor and forgotten people of our world, and for those who live in areas of turmoil and upheaval. Although we hear on the news and

ouncil 1963: Bessie
lacMurchy, Bernice Scott,
auline Brown

advantage of a learning opportunity.

I have been a member of the Hildur Hermanson Auxiliary at St. Andrew's in Saskatoon ever since. I have been the treasurer for our little group for several years now, and when our provincial group was re-designed, I agreed to become co-president with Marina Onclin. I was very lucky to have Marina as my mentor when I took on this steep learning curve.

I have had the privilege of attending the Annual Council at Crieff Hills, Ontario, and of serving on the Executive Council. Meeting many long-serving WMS members from across the country at these meetings has been a real pleasure.

*Arline has been married to Wayne for 44 years and they have one son. She has been happily involved with St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Saskatoon for many years, serving as an elder for much of that time and clerk of session until this year.*

## Over 50 Years

### by Rev. Betty McLagan

My introduction to the Women's Missionary Society was through Explorers, the girl's mid-week group for ages 9 to 11. It was through the Explorer program that I became interested in the WMS and soon became children's work secretary for the Montreal Presbyterial. The WMS was extremely involved in children and youth work in the late 1950s. They purchased the manuals, mission studies, pins, and scarfs for the groups. We had 18 Explorer groups in the Montreal Presbyterial and had rallies with over 100 children participating.

In the early 1960s, I became synodical children's work secretary for the Synod of Quebec and Eastern Ontario and visited groups all over the synodical. In those days we had training sessions for all officers of WMS at Albert College in Belleville, ON, during the summer months. We stayed at the college for five days

and learned new songs and games, and interacted with all of the officers of the WMS in Ontario and Quebec. The WMS national staff, Mable Booth for children and youth work and Lois Powrie for adult groups were involved in the training at Albert College and we all went home energized for another year.

It was just a small step from children's work secretary to president of the Montreal Presbyterial in the middle 60s (while I was raising my family). It was a large presbyterial with 37 groups. Everything was done formally in those days; at every function we had a head table and we wore hats and gloves on all occasions.

After my husband died, I went back to university and graduated from Presbyterian College. I was ordained in 1985 and posted to Armstrong, BC. St. Andrew's had a small WMS group of five or six ladies and I became a member. Although we were a small group, considerable funds were raised for missions. We had a mission Sunday every year, long before the national church instituted a national mission Sunday. My interest continued in WMS.

I came down to the lower mainland (Langley) from Prince George in 1995 and became president of Westminster Presbyterial, and in 1998 synodical president. As the years went by and fewer members wanted to take office, I returned as British Columbia Synodical President in 2009. We have just celebrated our 100*th* Anniversary. Of course, our synodical is much smaller now and we have just one presbyterial within the synodical. We have changed our structure to a small co-ordinating committee to carry on until June 2015.

For over 50 years. I have been part of the WMS within groups, presbyterial, and synodical in three provinces. It became a very important part of my life. I have formed many friendships, traveled many miles in Canada and overseas, experiencing mission work first hand. I feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to work with many wonderful dedicated people in the WMS.

*The Rev. Betty McLagan is chair, co-ordinating committee of British Columbia Synodical.*

## Go and Make Disciples

by Rev. Rosemary Doran

When I first came to Canada, many church people told me that the WMS was on its way out. It was a thing of the past, its usefulness outdated, its membership declining. Over fifty years later, we're still here! That has to say

Atlin Nurses

General Assembly 2004: Margaret McGillivray, Joanne Instance and Sarah Kim

in church of war and natural disasters, I think it is only when we hear an individual's story of how they are affected that we understand and feel their pain. How easy it is to live only in my own safe home, with loving family and friends around, forgetting that most of the world lives in hunger, sickness, and poverty.

How fortunate I am to have been invited to go to a WMS meeting those many years ago. **Thank you** Women's Missionary Society of The Presbyterian Church in Canada!

But now I ask myself, is it 'times up' for the WMS? Is there still work for the WMS to do? How will the next generation of women be involved in and learn about the mission of the church? Certainly the conditions that prevailed 150 years ago that caused women to form a mission society are no longer present. There are lots of opportunities for meaningful work for women in the church, but there are still challenges to consider. With few exceptions, I suspect that mission education in most congregations is sadly missing, especially in congregations where there is or has been no WMS. Perhaps this is the time, while there **is** time, for the women of the WMS to seriously consider how we could help to change this. It will be hard work, but WMS women have not shunned hard work in the past.

Are you willing? For some, change is painful; for some, change is exciting. Do you want to belong to an organization in pain, or an organization that faces the future with a sense of pride for its past and excitement for the future? I wonder, what would the women of 1914 say to us?

# I Was That Kid

## by Colleen Wood

I was that kid who was brought to Women's Missionary Society meetings as a babe in arms. I was that kid who was at your Christmas meeting, often doing a reading or acting a part in a play. I was that kid who sang a duet at your presbyterial meeting as a young teen, my first and last duet. I am now that woman who is a member and I have my mom's WMS pin tucked away in my jewelry box.

I didn't always attend the WMS and didn't actually become a member until after the birth of my first child. To be honest, I probably didn't even know there was WMS membership. I likely thought, like most things, you just show up. With the birth of my first child, I wanted an 'excuse' to get out, to leave the baby with my husband and have some me time. The WMS was an obvious choice.

They were welcoming women, women who reminded me of my mother and so many of the women who nurtured my faith as I was growing up in the church. And, their focus on mission was of obvious interest to me. My history includes mission trips, and a time as the Youth in Mission coordinator for The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I was also at that time serving as the youth ministry consultant for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda, a position partially funded by the WMS. Also, the WMS's support of young people, another of my passions, has a long and ongoing history.

My group, St. Andrew's Pringle, Brampton, likely wonders when they will see me next. Although I have been involved in some leadership over the past few years, I admit to not being the most reliable or consistent attendee. I am sure they have provided more for me, in terms of nurture, care, education, and friendship, than I will ever provide to them. They are still always welcoming, even when I have missed the past several months. For that I am thankful.

For me, they are a gift. As a WMS staff person, they connect me to the grassroots. They are a strong group and I am inspired that they try new things and have managed to attract a few younger women. Overwhelmingly, they are a group of leaders. Everyone in the group takes on some type of leadership role—there is a place for everyone to serve.

# Short, but Meaningful

## by Arline Sanderson

My involvement with the Women's Missionary Society has been short compared to many who have had their experiences evolve through generations. When the church study on HIV/AIDS became available several years ago, I took

something about our durability, our commitment, and our ability to change with the times—though some good things never change. I have lived in five different presbyterials and visited many more across the country, and I have always encountered great fellowship, keen mission awareness and practical love of neighbour.

The Society has its roots in the early 1800s in Ontario and in Montreal, where a Ladies Society began some work in evangelism and outreach. By 1864, the Montreal Ladies Auxiliary Association was formed, later becoming the Woman's Missionary Society, Montreal. In 1876 the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society came into being in Toronto, followed in 1903 by the Women's Home Missionary Society. In 1914 these organizations came together as the Women's Missionary Society WD (Western Division), which was separate from the sister organization WMS ED(Eastern Division), now known as the Atlantic Mission Society.

Initially the WMS funded and sent out missionaries overseas as well as within Canada. Instrumental in helping to build schools, hospitals, and hostels, it also provided and staffed Christian Education programs in synods and presbyteries. Not all WMS members could do this "boots on the ground" work, but they raised large amounts of money for the Society's own projects and for the work of the national church. Eventually the WMS stopped sending out missionaries, but continued to support national church projects, as long as resources permitted. It also funds mission projects of its own choosing and remains an important channel for mission education.

The WMS has provided many leaders to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, both lay and ordained. My own journey is a case in point. It was through the WMS that I discovered I could speak—in public, that is! And when I was called to ordained ministry, I received financial support from the Society, as well as many words of encouragement. The preaching stole that I wear was a cherished gift from WMS friends. It was a great honour for me to be national President from 1995–1997 and also to be invited to collaborate with Dr. Lois Klempa in writing the history of the Society, *Certain Women Amazed Us: The Women's Missionary Society, Their Story, 1864–2002.*

The women who came together in 1914 to form the WMS must have had qualms and hesitations, questions and doubts, knowing they were leaving the familiar to venture into the unknown, as do we when we look ahead. But the bedrock for them and us is our faith and our commitment to Christian love and service. Maybe some day in the future women will look back at <u>us</u> and say "Wow! Look at what <u>they</u> did! Maybe we could do the same?"

PRAYER

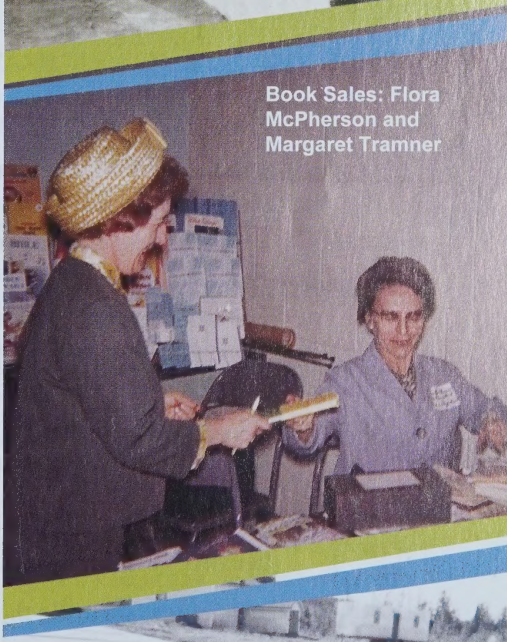
God of the ages, we see you on every page of our history, always inspiring, leading, and encouraging us into the next new thing you have in mind for us. We thank you for the dedication of our forebears in the faith and in the Society, who used their God-given talents and resources to go and tell the story, close to home or far across the world. We pray that we today may honour their legacy and fulfil our own calling by dedicating our lives to your service, wherever that may take us. We pray in the name of Jesus who said, "Go and make disciples of all nations." Amen

Romans 10:11–15

The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Packing bales



Book Sales: Flora McPherson and Margaret Tramner

Washing the WMS vehicle

# Go and Tell

## WMS 75th Anniversary: Worship Service

by Patricia Elford

PRELUDE: Lord, speak to me #767

CALL TO WORSHIP:

This is our God's house. Called by Jesus Christ, enabled by the Holy Spirit, let us praise God!

HYMN: Come thou almighty King #293

SCRIPTURE READING: John 20:1–18

SCRIPTURE READING AND PRAYER RESPONSE: John 20:14–18 (TEV)

Reader: ...she turned around and saw Jesus standing there; but she did not know it was Jesus.

**Response: Mary did not know you. Forgive us, when we because of grief, anger, prejudice, or fear, do not recognize you.**

Reader: "Woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her.

**Response: Jesus knew why Mary was crying. Mary thought she knew. Forgive us when we don't tell you what we really feel; when we don't take time with you to determine our own motives.**

Reader: "Who is it that you are looking for?"

**Response: Mary sought an earthly Jesus, confined in time and space. When she met Jesus, she no longer recognized him. Forgive us God, when we confine you to our personal definitions of you, unable to see your glory, feel the excitement of your presence, because of the smallness of our vision.**

HYMN: Lead me Jesus #646 or Be thou my vision #461

Reader: She thought he was the gardener, so she said to him, "If you took him away, sir, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

**Response: In her blindness, Mary assigned another role to Jesus, one, almost, of enemy—an invader who would steal her beloved Lord's body. Forgive us dear Father, when we fight your will and try to do it our way!**

Reader: Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

**Response: I long to hear my name, spoken in loving compassion, by you, Jesus.**

Reader: She turned toward him and said in Hebrew "Rabboni!" (This means teacher.)

**Response: Teacher, help us to know you. Keep us aware of your presence.**

HYMN: With the Lord as my guide #574

Reader: "Do not hold onto me," Jesus told her, "because I have not yet gone back up to the Father."

**Response: Jesus you have now ascended. Help us not to cling selfishly and fearfully to you.**

Reader: "But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God."

**Response: Mary had thought Jesus was a stranger, yet he sent her to serve Him, to "be" for Him, to take His message to the others. Thank you, God, that I too, have a chance to be your effective messenger.**

OFFERING HYMN: Come let us sing #706

OFFERTORY PRAYER: O God, accept our gifts, accept our love, accept ourselves. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reader: So Mary Magdaline went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her.

HYMN: Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go #652

Response: Mary went and told. Let us not sit and hold the good news to ourselves. May we, nourished in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, go, with great enthusiasm, and tell. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (optional)

READER AND CONGREGATION: Jesus is risen! God is powerful over life and death. Hope is ours to share. Hallelujah!

HYMN: Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

BENEDICTION: God grant us courage and imagination, vision and strength, and compelling love. Go and tell.

*This service first appeared in the 1989 edition of* Glad Tidings.

*In 1989, Patricia Anne Elford was a member of the Women's Missionary Society, an involved mother, clergy wife, cat-carer, writer, and artist, living in Innisfail, AB, gaining credits, when geographically possible, towards being ordained herself. Having been ordained, Patricia has served as a minister in Edmonton, Vancouver, and Toronto.*

*Currently, in 2014, Patricia, a retired minister, is a member of The Word Guild, and of the Pembroke Observer's Community Editorial Board, an active editor, educator, presenter, and professional writer, living in Petawawa, ON, with her husband, Robert and two cats. Her poetry and prose, have appeared in newsletters, literary journals, newspapers, periodicals and anthologies (one of which, Grandmothers' Necklace, she compiled and edited as a fundraiser for the Stephen Lewis Foundation).*

# Anniversary Hymn

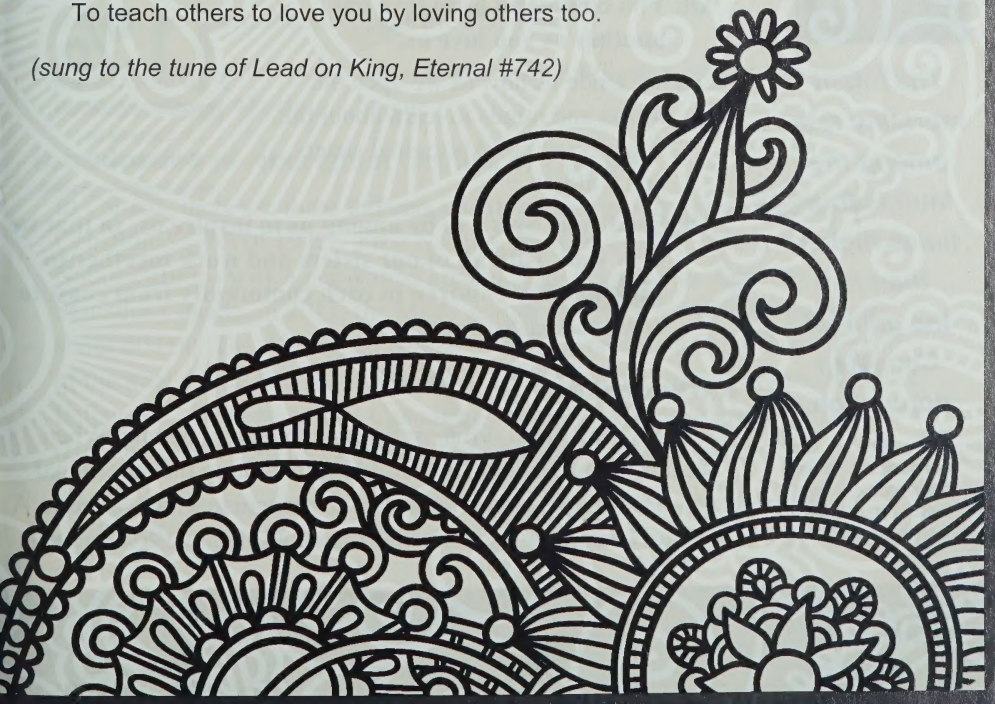
by Sheila Jakus

Lead on, our gracious Saviour, we will keep following you;
We've asked for guidance always and strived your will to do.
One hundred years of service—for those who've heard your call.
We gather now to honour and thank you for them all.

Our mothers and grandmothers showed us when we were small,
That life is about giving to others one and all.
They served through saving pennies, through knitting, sewing, too,
That those in need might feel love and know you as we do.

We've carried on tradition in funding projects now,
To help our missionaries—their stories tell us how.
With your help, Lord, we keep on—our fourfold purpose true:
To teach others to love you by loving others too.

*(sung to the tune of Lead on King, Eternal #742)*



This is the fourth, and final study on maternal health.

# MATERNAL and CHILD HEALTH AMONG CANADA'S ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

by Linda Patton-Cowie

*The infant mortality rate among the Inuit is four times higher than for the general Canadian population.*

Smylie, J., & Adomako, P. (2009). *Indigenous children's health report: Health assessment in action*

## Opening Prayer

Leader: Creator God, you have given us the gift of life,

**All: you create no life in vain.**

Leader: You have created us to be in relationship with you and with each other;

**All: we are fearfully and wonderfully made.**

Leader: Your works are beyond our understanding.

**All: You command us to love one another as you love us;**

Leader: guide us now as we open our hearts and minds to learn about the situation of our Aboriginal sisters and children.

**11%**

*of the total Aborigial Peoples population in Canada is 0–6 years-old.*

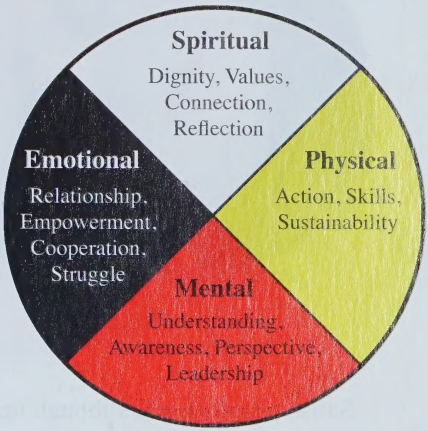
*Statistics Canada, 2008*

**All: Send your Spirit to be among us to inspire us, so that we may walk with all of our sisters and work together to raise healthy children in each community from coast to coast to coast. Amen.**

## Introduction

"Health" can mean different things to different people. When we talk about maternal and child health among the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, it's important to recognize what we mean. A Health Council of Canada report from 2011, says, "Aboriginal

communities have always believed that health requires a focus on the bigger picture. A healthy life is seen as a balance between the physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental parts of ourselves."[1] As well, the community is a central focus when describing Aboriginal health; health "includes physical well-being but also the social, emotional, spiritual, and cultural well-being of the whole community. Each individual is able to achieve their full potential as a human being, thereby contributing to the entire well-being of the community. It is a whole life view and includes the cyclical concepts of life and death".



Medicine Wheel[3]

It can help to visualize this using the Medicine Wheel, a central and important concept among Aboriginal people.[2]

## Introduction to Aboriginal Groups in Canada

In Canada, there are three Indigenous/Aboriginal groups recognized by the Constitution Act of 1982—First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. There are 633 First Nations groups with a population approaching one million. According to Statistics Canada, in 2011, the Métis people number over 400 000 and Inuit about 60 000. The Aboriginal people of Canada represent about four percent of the total population. First Nations and Inuit receive a range of services from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and from First Nations and Inuit Health (Health Canada). Métis people are not eligible for similar support.

For Native Americans and Canadian First Nations, the international border crosses between traditional tribal territories (Iroquois, Ojibway, Blackfoot, and

Salish peoples), and although linguistically and culturally diverse across North America, there are many commonalities on both sides. Most of the Indigenous cultural diversity in North America is seen west of the Rocky Mountains. Many Native Americans and Canadian First Nations view North America as one unit—Turtle Island.

The Inuit of Canada's arctic regions are closely related to the Inuit of Greenland and Alaska. In Canada, there are four Inuit regions: Nunavut Territory (80 percent Inuit), and Inuvialuit, Nunavik, and Nunatsiavut. Greenland (Inuut Nunaat), part of Denmark, is mostly Inuit.

The Métis, descendants of European men and First Nations women in western Canada, are a unique Indigenous group with their own language and culture.[4]

## The Importance of Maternal and Child Health among Canada's Aboriginal Peoples

As Christians, we realize that when one of God's children suffers, we are all diminished. It's important to focus our attention on maternal and child health among our own Aboriginal peoples because, as the Health Council of Canada acknowledges, "while there is diversity among First Nations, Inuit, and Metis populations, there are significant overall health and economic disparities

between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadian population."[5] Here are just some of the differences:

- "Aboriginal people are much more likely to live in poor health and die prematurely.
- Aboriginal people have a higher burden of chronic conditions and of infectious disease.
- Aboriginal children are more likely to die in the first year of life.
- Aboriginal people are more likely to live in poverty, which has a domino effect on other aspects of their lives. They are more likely to go hungry, to suffer from poor nutrition and obesity, and to live in overcrowded, substandard housing.
- Aboriginal people are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be unemployed". [6]

## The Lingering Effect of Residential Schools

Many Canadians are not aware of the history of residential schools, or how the effects of these schools continue to impact current generations and, in fact, the entire Aboriginal culture. For many generations, children were removed from their homes, taken to distant residential schools, and separated from their families, their communities, their culture, and their language. Because the children were no longer exposed to positive parenting role models, parenting skills weren't developed, and family connections disintegrated. "The fallout of this can be seen today in the form of low self-esteem, abuse, family violence, addictions, poor relationship and conflict resolution skills, high rates of single motherhood and teen pregnancy, mental health issues, lack of cultural knowledge, and a plethora of chronic health conditions."[7] Clearly, residential schools are still affecting current generations of Aboriginal peoples.

This is an area of specific concern to The Presbyterian Church in Canada. The Presbyterian Church in Canada operated eleven residential schools, two following Church Union in 1925 (Birtle School in Manitoba, and Cecilia Jeffrey School in Kenora, ON). In 1994, The 120th General Assembly adopted a confession that acknowledges our involvement in residential schools and asks for forgiveness.

## Specific Areas of Health Concerns for Aboriginal Mothers and Children

*Distance:* Distance to birthing services from local communities is a specific area of concern for Aboriginal peoples. Many pregnant Aboriginal women live in northern and remote communities that are not served by a midwife or other appropriate health professional, and so they must leave their homes and families, often for several weeks during their last trimester, to travel to an area with more health services. At such a critical time in their lives, these women and their new babies are separated from their partners and support systems. When they do return home, their communities often lack post-natal services, such as support for breastfeeding and programs that educate and support new parents.

*Limited Health Care:* Aboriginal women and children have limited access to health care as a result of many factors: geography, transportation costs, lack of primary health care providers, language barriers, difficulty in coordinating services, and scarcity of specialized services such as support for children with special needs.

*Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD):* Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder has been identified as a concern in Canada's Aborginal population.[8] One of the challenges in this discussion, is that there is no definitive statistics on the incidence of FASD among our First Nation's peoples. It is complex to diagnose, requiring a multi-disciplinary team. However, we know that alcohol abuse, including binge drinking, is common among Aboriginal women, and this does not stop when these women becomes pregnant. In the past, programs have focused almost exclusively on reducing the risk to the fetus, which is essential, but to focus treatment only during the pregnancy, does not help the mother or her child long-term.[9]

Those with FASD are known to suffer from life-long mental, physical, and developmental disabilities. In children this can show up in learning disabilities, poor memory, short attention spans, and poor judgment choices.[10]

*Mental Health Issues:* First Nations people are 35 percent more likely to suffer from mental health issues including suicide or self-inflicted injuries, which is 11 times higher than the national average.[11] It's imperative that culturally sensitive

and traditional treatment protocols are developed and that more Aboriginal health workers are trained to deliver these services. About 16 percent of Aboriginal adults have faced severe depression, which is double the national average.[12]

Aboriginal women are especially susceptible to mental health issues because of high rates of sexual abuse towards Aboriginal women and a lack of support from their partners. This affects their self esteem, their physical and emotional health, and has a negative effect on her children.[13]

Among Aboriginal youth, we also see higher rates of psychiatric problems than that of non-Aboriginal youth. Some of the causes of this may be confused ethnic identity, and higher rates of abuse (especially among girls).[14] Depression, or feelings of sadness, is seen more often in girls than boys.[15] As well, suicide rates are much higher among Aboriginal youth, five to six times higher, than among non-Aboriginal youth.[16]

## Discussion

1. What does "good health" mean to you? Create your own 'medicine wheel' to show your ideas.
2. Have you or anyone you known well experienced any of the same health concerns that are over-represented among our Aboriginal peoples?
3. If you were faced with the choice of giving birth in a remote location with little trained support, or travelling and giving birth without your family and community support nearby, what would you choose? Should any woman in Canada be forced to make such a decision?

## Biblical Reflection

1 Corinthians 12:12–26
John 10:10
Galatians 3:28

In small groups of 2–3, read the above passages. Read them individually, and then out loud slowly.

1. How do these texts pertain to the issues at hand?
2. What is God trying to tell us about maternal and child health and how we should respond to the needs that have been identified in Canada today?
3. What does the Corinthians passage teach us about how we ought to live as communities of God's children?

## Closing Prayer

Creator God,
We thank you for the gift of life, and for the opportunity to learn more about our Aboriginal sisters and the issues they face as they seek to bear and raise healthy children. We thank you for health and social service professionals who make an effort to provide services that are relevant and culturally sensitive.

In our own lives, O God, help us to be more compassionate and understanding as we hear of the challenges faced by others. Inspire our holy imaginations so that we can work together to bring about real change that will benefit Aboriginal maternal and child health in Canada.

We pray this in the name of your precious Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Rev. Linda Patton-Cowie serves God among the people of St. Mark's, in Orillia, ON. She is a member of the Healing and Reconciliation Committee of the PCC, and hopes that we will all—First Nations and Settlers alike—learn to live in right relations with each other.*

***For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.***

***1 Corinthians 12:12***

1 Health Council of Canada. *Understanding and Improving Aboriginal Maternal and Child Health in Canada; Conversations about Promising Practices across Canada.* 2011. p. 5

2 Aboriginal Health Strategy 2010–2015. *Strengthening the Circle: Partnering for Improved Health for Aboriginal People. Strengthening the Circle Partnership.* 2010.

3 Katz, Jennifer, FNMI, Aboriginal Education & UDL. www.threeblockmodel.com.

4 Prof Malcolm King PhD , Alexandra Smith MD, Prof Michael Gracey MD. *Indigenous health part 2: the underlying causes of the health gap.* The Lancet, Volume 374, Issue 9683, July 2009. p. 76–85.

5 Health Council of Canada, p. 4.

6 Ibid. p. 4.

7 Ibid. p. 20.

8 Tait, Caroline. Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Among Aboriginal People in Canada: Review and Analysis of the Intergenerational Links to Residential Schools Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Canada, 2003.

9 Ibid. p. xxi

10 *Aboriginal Health Strategy* 2010–2015. p. 25.

11 Health Council of Canada, p. 4.

12 www.heretohelp.bc.ca/factsheet/aboriginal-mental-health-and-substance-use

13 Ibid

14 Ibid.

15 National Aboriginal Health Organization. Regional Health Survey 2002/03 Adult Survey Highlights. www.naho.ca/firstnations/english/regionalhealth.

16 Aboriginal Healing Foundation. *Suicide among Aboriginal People in Canada; The Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research Series.* Aboriginal Healing Foundation, Ottawa, 2007.


**Aboriginal people in Canada:**

698,025 First Nations people

389,785 Métis

50,485 Inuit

***2006 Census (Statistics Canada, 2008)***

**The infant mortality rate among the Inuit is four times higher than for the general Canadian population.**

**Smylie, J., & Adomako, P. (2009).** ***Indigenous children's health report: Health assessment in action***

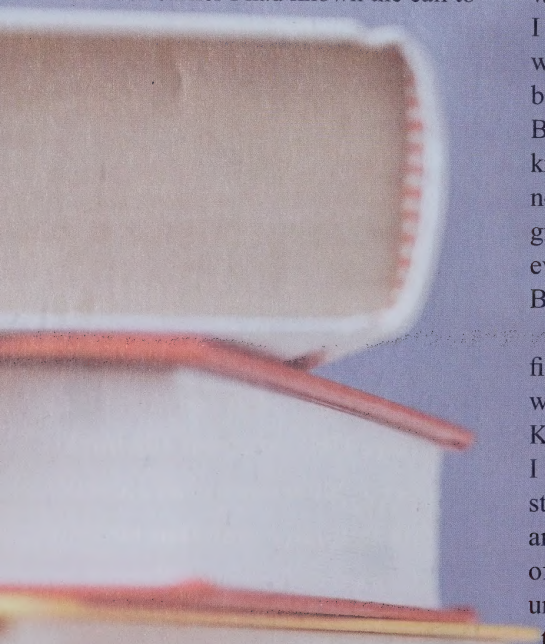
**"First Nations children born to teenagers has remained high since 1986, at about 100 births per 1,000 women—a rate seven times higher than that for other Canadian teenagers."**

**Guimond, E., and N. Robitaille (2008).** ***When Teenage Girls Have Children: Trends and Consequences***

# Our Profession

by Audrey Cameron

I heard God speak in the washroom, at Walmart of all places. It was a Friday afternoon, after a long day and a long week at school. I was tired and discouraged. As the pretend teacher, the substitute, I was having second thoughts about whether I was up to the task of teaching. I thought my school days were over. I thought wrong. Yes, I had been to the school concerts, school basketball games, and after-school pickups of family members, but I had not been in a classroom for 27 years. Over two decades earlier I had known the call to youth ministry, the kind that happens outside a classroom, and so I had placed the chalk on the ledge, erased the board, and left the school to embrace the educational life of the church. Now, 27 years later, I was back. And I was not so sure that I wanted to be, or that I was meant to be.



It was with mixed feelings that I placed my name on the list for substitute teachers in my area. I was grateful for the professional education I had and how my time and education in youth ministry was valued by those who renewed my teaching licence. I was grateful for the hope of some work that allowed me to stay in my beloved homeland of the Maritimes. But, good heavens, I did not even know what the teacher dress code was now. Did I remember enough of my grammar and mathematical lessons to even have a chance in a classroom? But I needed a job!

My first day of teaching came the first week of school. Surprisingly, within an hour, all seemed familiar. Kids are kids wherever you find them. I survived. And better yet, so did the students! One day of teaching led to another and another, and by the end of September I had gotten past the unfamiliarity of the classroom, but not the idea of me being in the school and being a teacher. I still felt like a visitor and a pretend teacher. Then I went to Walmart. Coming out of the

bathroom, I met a young girl from a class that I had just taught. She came to me, put her arms around my waist and said, "I am so happy. I am seeing all my teachers today."

That moment was a defining moment for me. It was a holy encounter with the One! It was a moment of affirmation that I had passed the test. I could be the teacher, even if it was day by day, and at the behest of an ailing colleague. I was so grateful for the moment and the voice of God in the form of a Grade 5 girl. She called me a teacher!

I have thought of this encounter often as I taught over the past five months, including last Friday as I drove to school. Friday was a challenging day in the classroom. Two snow days in one week were taking the blame for the clamour and confusion of the day. And there was a hockey game happening in the afternoon that everyone wanted to watch, including me. I was not immune from 'Olympic Fever.' With the Principal's blessing, I moved back the desks and streamed the epic game for the class to see. But I was a teacher and thought I better make a teaching moment out of the time! So, with passion and conviction, I did a little song and dance about respect and nationalism and, well, lots of things. I ended with the line, "And when you are older, you may not remember anything I said, but you will remember that I let you watch the game."

And then God spoke, again, this time through the voice of a Grade 6 boy. "Ms. Cameron, let's face it. You are just a substitute. We are not going to remember you. But, I think we will remember how you made us feel."

I laughed and I wanted to hug him. He told me my real profession. It is to love.

I am a teacher. I always have been. We all are. And really, whether we are in the classroom or the bathroom at Walmart, it hardly matters. It is not about knowing grammar or mathematics or being remembered in years to come for letting the little ones watch a hockey game.

I am a disciple. I have been for a long time. We all are. And really, whether we are in the classroom or the bathroom at Walmart, it hardly matters. It is about bringing the love of Christ. It is to love.

And so, this week, as I drove to school to be the pretend teacher once again, I prayed that every student in my class would feel loved, safe, and appreciated. I prayed that somehow, as I taught them about prefixes and suffixes and integers and isosceles triangles, they would feel God's love around them.

Let's face it. They were not going to remember me. I was just a teacher, and a substitute one at that. But they might remember how I had made them feel. They might remember that I had loved them.

*Audrey Cameron lives in her homeland of rural Nova Scotia on a blueberry farm.*

# Book Reviews

reviewed by Colleen Wood

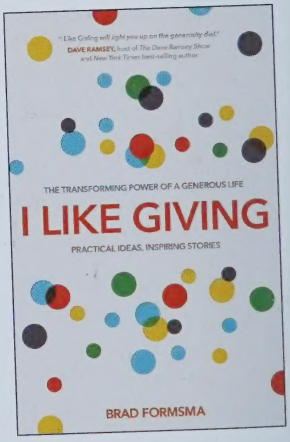
***Veggie Tales Sticky Mosaics***

I have the luxury of visiting The Book Room often, which means I also get to chat with Susan Clarke, its manager, often. So, Susan has a fairly good idea of what I like. And, this time she really got me. While still in the store room, before they even hit the shelf, I was heading home with these Veggie Tale Mosaics. Both of my children love mosaic craft kits, putting stickers onto something in a marked pattern, so I knew these would get us through some long afternoon.

I brought them out today, and they were a huge hit with both my four-year-old and my eight-year-old. The neat part about this set is that you put the jewel tiles onto reusable stickers of Veggie Tales characters. There were ten Veggie Tales characters, and we likely spent about an hour finishing them all before sticking them onto various windows and mirrors in our home. This definitely provided great entertainment for the three of us. I would suggest this for children ages 4–9, especially those who are fans of Veggie Tales.

***I Like Giving***

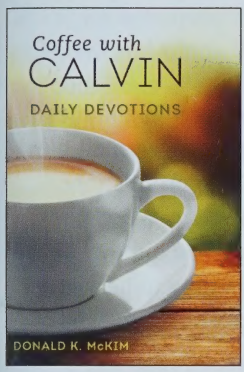
by Brad Formsma


"I Like Giving will light you up on the generosity dial!"
DAVE RAMSEY, host of The Dave Ramsey Show and New York Times best-selling author
THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF A GENEROUS LIFE
I LIKE GIVING
PRACTICAL IDEAS. INSPIRING STORIES
BRAD FORMSMA

Those who are already generous givers will likely not be surprised to hear that the more people give away, the happier they are. The science shows it, and this book really helps to illustrate the point. Formsma provides a very brief account of the science in his book, but really the book is a book of stories.

It includes a wonderful story of a man named Robert who was at an airport and approached by a woman looking for a pay phone. He offered his cell phone, and after he realized that she was not walking away with it, he was astounded that his generosity was rewarded with a prayer she said for him. There is also the story of Elizabeth who bought new glasses for a friend in need. There is a police officer's story of working with others to buy a trumpet for a teenage boy. Almost all of these stores are simple acts, many done without much forethought, but their impact is amazing.

Overall, the theme of this book is change. It teaches why and how you can become more generous, and encourages you to do it. The author says, "When we choose to give, we change, and the people around us change." Amen.



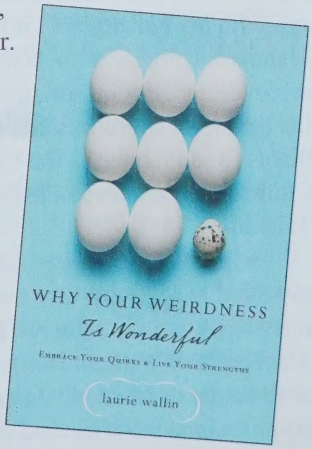

***Coffee with Calvin***
by Donald K. McKim

This book is a collection of 84 devotions looking at Calvin's theology. Each devotion begins with a very short reading from Calvin's Institutes, followed by a short devotion on it. It covers topics such as the Trinity, our calling, gratitude, and prayer. What impressed me about this book is how the author can take deep concepts and make them accessible. It is a great little introduction to Calvin, and provides meaningful and practical ideas for Christian living.

***Why Your Weirdness is Wonderful***
by Laurie Wallin

I have long known that God loves me, quirks and all, but this book asked me to take it one more step and to see some of my quirks, or my weirdness, as a strength. Wallin says that "scripture affirms that what God designs is good." Although these quirks, without God leading us, might be negatives, she says that sometimes our weirdness can be positive if it forces us to be dependent on God. Without God, they might leave you feeling inadequate or keep you from accomplishing amazing things. For example, worry can shut you down, or empower you to go on. With God's leading you will know whether you should listen to those worries or overcome them.

Wallin often encourages the reader to think about how things that we consider weaknesses might bring benefit. She talks of a colleague who considers herself an over-thinker. Instead of worrying about the time she spends thinking and replaying events, or considering the wasted time, perhaps she can consider the benefit of this behaviour. As a speaker and blogger, this person presents well thought-out ideas. Her hunt for the perfect phrase, although likely frustrating to her, helps others to learn more about God and the world.




Wallin certainly provides a refreshing view of our challenges. Perhaps this book will help you to see those challenges and use them as strengths in God's kingdom. I would suggest this book for a female audience because most of the examples she give are from a female perspective or are about women.

# Mission In Action

**Louise Gamble**
**Taiwan**

*Greetings from historical Tamsui, in northern Taiwan.*

What a wonderful, warm January we are having here in northern Taiwan! It contrasts with the daily reports of the weather extremes in Canada. When I step outside the door of my office, I enjoy the bright sunshine and balmy temperatures. The camellia bushes are in full bloom. The cheery sounds of children playing in the elementary school yard fill the room.

My task here remains the same: the transcription and translation of the original Canadian Reports of the North Formosan Mission, from its inception to 1923. I spend my days in front of the computer checking and re-checking details, discussing appropriate translations of peculiar expressions used over a hundred years ago with my colleague in my limited Mandarin Chinese. I am constantly discovering fresh information about the development of mission policy, theory, and practice as the Canadian Church grew and expanded in Taiwan.

Oxford County has become involved in a special way with the missionary work of George Leslie MacKay. Dr. William Butt and his wife Karen of London, Ontario, were commissioned to write and produce a stage play about his life, and they were here last spring to learn all they could about him. The production, which will take place in Woodstock, Ontario, promises to be quite interesting. I am hoping to hear good reports from those of you in Canada who can attend this performance.

The historical records we are working on involve the educational, medical, and evangelical work of the Church in North Formosa. In November, a joint dedication service was held to consecrate this work to the glory of God.

I continue to live here on the campus of the Tamkang High School, and although I am not formally involved with the school at this time, I am in daily contact with students and teachers.

I want to thank all the good folk in Canada who sent Christmas greetings. Even with postage at such a price, I received so many welcome Christmas cards that it is impossible for me to respond to each and every one!

**The Cariboo Presbyterian Church**
**Excerpts from Northern Light, The official newsletter of The Cariboo Presbyterian Church**

*Changes in Seasons and Transitions in Mission*

The Cariboo mission is at a transition point. As we look ahead to

2015, we anticipate the retirement of David and Linda Webber and we are conscious of the changes that will bring to this ministry. In order to make the transition a smooth and healthy one, we have brought on a new (but not so new) member to the pastoral team. Bruce Wilcox, an elder on our session and designated lay missionary, answered God's call to full-time ministry. He will be working alongside David Webber to continue the current house church services while exploring new ways of reaching out in the Southern communities.

When David retires, Bruce will continue the ministry that has been in David's capable hands for a quarter of a century.

*Memories and Reflections of 2013: Bruce Wilcox*

Looking back on 2013, Jackie and I have been blessed with opportunities to worship with and connect with more folk in the house churches. The main ministry points for me continue to be the Forest Grove and Canim Lake areas, Carefree Manor on 100 Mile House, and Lac La Hache.

When the president of the Forest Grove Legion asked is I would be their chaplain in November, we really sensed God opening a door. Not long after taking on this role, the legion committee enthusiastically endorsed my request to have church services there on Sunday evenings. We have since folded the Canim Lake House Church into the new, more central location. Forest Grove hasn't had church services in a long while and the early response is encouraging.

We have also been blessed with slow, but steady, growth at our Lac La Hache Community Church. We have many dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who fix things around the church, plow the snow, play special music, help with the coffeehouse outreach, and work our Facebook page.

In pondering the amazing grace of God, it strikes me that my whole younger life was spent mainly in the bars of these same two communities. If anyone would have told me that I would one day be ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ in these places, and that church would actually be in the Forest Grove Legion, it would literally have seemed more realistic to say that I would fly to the moon. It seems that as far as God is concerned, our best witness for Christ might be where we are known because that is where people will see the transformation Christ has made in our life.

## Overseas Staff Birthdays

**June**

1 – Louise Gamble, Taiwan

**July**

2 – Juan Diego VanWissen-Zuniga, Nicaragua

11 – Jeremy Alexander VanWissen-Zuniga, Nicaragua

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# In the Society

## Presbyterial

**Huron-Perth** Presbyterial Annual Meeting was held on February 10 at Knox Presbyterian, Monkton. The theme for the day was, Guided by Star and Compass. The Rev. Sarah Thompson, minister at Knox Church, and Eldeen Ward of the Monkton WMS welcomed the ladies.

Mary Duffin, Presbyterial president, led the morning meditation by reflecting on the wise men being guided by a star to worship the Christ child. Then the Listowel Wallace group led the Memorial Service, paying tribute to seven deceased members. Various reports were then given.

The list of new officers for the coming year was read and Shirley Aitchison, synodical president, installed the officers.

The afternoon session began with a hymn sing, and St. Mary's Friendship Auxiliary led devotions, reminding us that Christians are to be a light to the world.

The guest speaker, Lillian Kluka, Canada's first female Great Lakes sea captain and marine pilot, spoke of her experiences during 25 years of plying our Great Lakes through the Seaway system, and from the Arctic to Mexico. She supported her talk with slides of the various ships she captained.

**Sarnia-Lambton** Presbyterial Annual meeting was held at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Petrolia, with the Ruth McLean Auxiliary hosting.

The Rev. Janine Dekker led the Bible study on Feeding the Five Thousand, emphasizing the importance of the verbs in this parable.

Our guest speaker was Tina Hunter, Director of the Petrolia Branch of the Pregnancy Option and Support Centre. Her job is to inform young women of their options and to give them all the support and love they need. They provide free pregnancy tests, information, support, prenatal and parenting classes, adoption information, post-abortion counselling, and baby clothes. A crisis hotline is available 24 hours a

day. Funding comes from individuals, churches, groups, and businesses.

The Rev. Harvey Osborne installed the officers for 2014.

**Niagara** Presbyterial held their Annual General Meeting at Stamford Presbyterian Church on January 23 in Niagara Falls. President Nancy Wehrmann welcomed the members and guests and constituted the meeting with prayer. The theme, Celebrate 100 Years, was chosen to honour the anniversary of the WMS. Women from the churches in the Niagara area each brought scrapbooks, photo albums, and group histories of their WMS for the display area, which was enjoyed during the lunch.

In business, Treasurer Nancy Miller reported that the Presbyterial had surpassed their financial goal for 2013, and the Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi installed the officers for 2014.

The Rev. Graham Kennedy led the worship and communion service. Marilyn Leslie and Mary Lou Johnston conducted the Memorial Service where we remembered 12 of our friends who passed away

**Mary Jane Bissset, the Rev. Graham Kennedy, the Rev. Pearl Vasarhelyi, and Nancy Wehrmann**

this year. Our guest speaker, Mary Jane Bisset, gave an interesting presentation on change, reminding us of the significant change that happens in 500 years. For example, think of the significant change brought forth by the Protestant Reformation 500 years ago. In the WMS, as we think of our history, we remember the start of the organization and the things that have been accomplished over the years. We remember our own Isabel McKeown who recently passed away at the age of 104. She had supported the WMS since she was five years old. Mary Jane reminded us that in Matthew's gospel, Jesus teaches us to step out of our comfort zone and to do new things. Faith and works go hand in hand.

The 100th Annual Meeting of **London** Presbyterial was held at Knox Presbyterian, St. Thomas, on January 16 with the theme, Celebrating 100 Years.

President Valerie Shaw welcomed everyone and then reports were given. Joan Smith, past president of the WMS, then gave a PowerPoint presentation on her trip to Afghanistan in May 2013. We saw how our WMS funds, in partnership with Presbyterian World Service & Development, are making positive improvements. Through the Together We Can! project the women in Afghanistan are benefitting from this mission work and seeing possible hope for a better future.

**Colleen Wood, Shirley Aitcheson, Valerie Shaw, Joan Smith**

Debra Webster then gave an interesting history of the Fingal WMS, before Joan Smith installed the new officers.

During lunch, members visited various displays depicting the history of our local WMS groups, enjoyed anniversary cake, and purchased used books (all for a donation!).

The afternoon speaker, Colleen Wood, editor of *Glad Tidings*, spoke about her trip to India with 11 other WMS members, for the opening of the Jobat Hostel. The group was received with much joy and thankfulness. Again, this important work was a Together We Can! project and proved that the WMS is making a difference in the world.

Fringal WMS led the closing worship, and our final hymn was O God our help in ages past. Departing for home, as a light dusting of snow fell, we all could reflect on the past 100 years of the WMS, remembering our achievements and successes, and remembering God's many blessings.

**Waterloo-Wellington** Presbyterial Annual Meeting was held at Westminster-St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Guelph, on February 2 with the theme of Parish Nursing. Following the devotions and memorial service, the business meeting was constituted with prayer by President Donna Henry.

Reports were approved as printed, and Helen Cleghorn, treasurer, paid tribute to the efforts of the members in achieving another successful financial year, as well as supporting our continuing mission of sending pneumonia prevention vests and caps to the Bhil area of central India, where they are still needed and appreciated.

Karen Harding, the Parish Nurse from Duff's Presbyterian Church, Puslinch, was our guest speaker. She explained the work of a parish nurse and described some of the ways in which a parish nurse contributes to the overall health and well-being of the congregation and community. Through support and counseling she assists many people as they navigate their way through the health system and she also provides education and awareness of many health issues.

Tori Smit conducted a beautiful installation service for the new executive, including Dr. Wilma Welsh, as president, and Josie Tinholt, as vice-president and secretary, and many returning convenors.

**Lindsay** Presbyterial met at Beacon Church, Beaverton, on

January 29 for their Annual Meeting. After registration and refreshments, Helen Torrey and Blanche Simpson led the ladies in singing.

President Eileen Smith constituted the meeting with a prayer and welcome. The Cresswell group led worship based on Luke 10 and Isaiah 6, and we sang, I the Lord of sea and sky. They reminded us that we are all responsible to pray and share God's word.

Minutes from the 2013 Annual Meeting were then read and approved. Eileen Mennell, treasurer, reported a very successful 2013. Reports were then given from the executive. We also heard synodical reports in the afternoon.

Lunch, was followed by singing. Then, Linda Taylor, president of the Cannington Knox Presbyterian Women, spoke about three missions she is involved with: Korean Church Mission, Dorothy Lake Wilderness Camp, and the PCC Mission in Kenya.

The Uxbridge women led the In Memoriam service, remembering seven former members.

Following a short business meeting, we closed with a benediction and by singing, Spirit of the living God.

**Brockville** Presbyterial Annual Meeting was held on January 30 at Knox Presbyterian Church, Morrisburg.

Catherine Blatch, president, and Janet Jones, the incoming president, led worship on the theme, Let God Lead Us. We then heard positive reports from Gracefield Camp, Canada Youth 2014, and the Andy Gump Foundation, based in Vankleek Hill. We agreed to donate to all three of these organizations.

Christine Ball, our Area Education Consultant, then led a Bible study on spiritual well-being, using Luke 8:1–3. She shared a video, New Beginning, encouraging members to share stories of volunteers who received spiritual well-being.

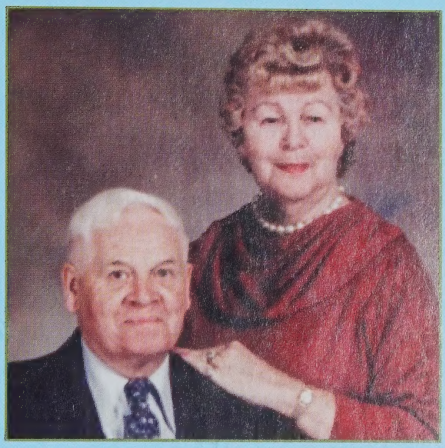
After lunch and a sing-a-long, the Rev. James Douglas spoke of his trip to Guatemala where he volunteered with the Andy Gump Foundation. The Foundation was founded by Brenda and Dave Godmere in memory of their teenage son, Andy, who died shortly before his 15th birthday. The organization began in Guatemala City working with those living in the dump, and now has expanded to serve the Mayan rural people. Most recently, a school was built for students with disabilities. The Godmeres are returning to Guatemala in February and report that there is a need for volunteers with medical, teaching, physiotherapy, and dental skills, as well as a need for general workers and funds.

Donna McIlveen installed the incoming president, Janet Jones, and the new executive.

On a cold, snowy January 25th, the Presbyterial of **Lanark-Renfrew** met for their annual meeting at St. Andrew's Church in Carleton Place. President Lois Patchell welcomed everyone and constituted the meeting

*provisionaries*

**Planting seeds of hope.**
**For generations to come.**



## Ordinary Couple Leaves Extraordinary Legacy

January 24th was a busy day for the executors of the estate of Marion and Bruce Berry. Their first stop was Toronto General Hospital where they presented a cheque for $425,000. Their next stop was Evangel Hall where they presented a second cheque for $425,000. Then it was off to the PCC's national office, where they presented two more cheques for $425,000 each to PWS&D and *Presbyterians Sharing*.

The Berrys lived quiet, ordinary lives. Bruce was a shop teacher. Marion was the organist at Thornhill Presbyterian Church, where they were both faithful members. When asked to describe the couple, one of the executors replied: "Bruce was a builder. Marion was an encourager." And they will continue to build and encourage for years to come through their extraordinary legacy to the church and ministries they loved.

**What will your legacy be?**

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in prayer, and then we sang the WMS song and Amigos de Cristo. The Rev. Barry Carr, minister of Almonte and Carleton Place congregations, led the worship service. He read the scripture and shared his Christian journey. While he was working at General Motors in Oshawa, he discerned God was calling him to ordained ministry. In 2008, Mr. Carr attended York University, and in 2010 he began studies at Knox College. He graduated in 2013, and in June was called to this presbytery. The service closed with singing, One more step along the world I go.

Shirley Gardiner read The Season of Prayer and then the reports were given. The Renfrew group acknowledged Isobel Wallace, a charter member of the Dr. Margaret O'Hara Auxiliary and a WMS member for 70 years. Isobel stood and was applauded.

Betty Hardie and Margaret Sams conducted an In Memoriam service. Betty read the Beatitudes as Marg Sams placed carnations in a vase to remember Irene Mayhew, Joyce Brunton, Greta Crabbe, and Dorothy Lowry. Then, Pat Labron blessed us with special music, and Joan Hilliard presented life memberships to Sandy Lowry, Rhoda Anderson, and Vivian Young.

Next, our guest speakers, Kathy Lowe and her daughter Tamara Daigle, spoke about their recent trip to Nicaragua with SchoolBOX, a charity started in 2006 by Tom Affleck from Almonte. The group took soccer uniforms, school supplies, and small gifts for the children (duck tape was very popular). They worked on two school sites, sifting gravel, carrying rocks, wetting cement blocks, and priming and painting grates. Playing with and talking to the children was an integral part of the visit. It was a very interesting and educational visit to Nicaragua for these WMS ladies.

## Circulation News

Our apologies for the late delivery of your March April edition of *Glad Tidings*. We had to change mail houses for this edition and there were some delays in this new process.

If you are ever waiting for a specific resource in *Glad Tidings* in the future, please contact Colleen Wood at 416-441-1111, extension 322, or by email at gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. Generally she is able to get a copy of a study or worship service out to you by email in a day or two, or by post within the week. As well, you can also find some of the resources on our website at: www.wmspcc.ca/glad-tidings/

Thank you for your patience!

# Remembering

Geraldine Teft
Beamsville WMS
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
Beamsville ON

Flora I. Chisholm
Kenyon WMS
Dunvegan ON

Hazel Rowe
Knox-St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Dutton ON

Lillian "June" Wylds
Ashfield and Lucknow
WMS groups
Lucknow ON

Marjorie Irvine
Knox WMS
North Easthope ON

Eleanor May Mooney,
Chippawa Presbyterian
Church,
Chippawa, Niagara Falls
ON

Ann Crain
St. Andrew's WMS
Ottawa ON

Mary McElwain
Knox WMS
St. Catharines ON

Barb McKay
Evening Auxiliary,
Avonton Presbyterian
Church, St. Pauls ON

Johann Leitch
Doris Webb
Mission Group, Armour
Heights Presbyterian
Toronto ON

Gwen Davenport
Riverdale Presbyterian
Church, Toronto ON


# *Presbyterians Sharing*

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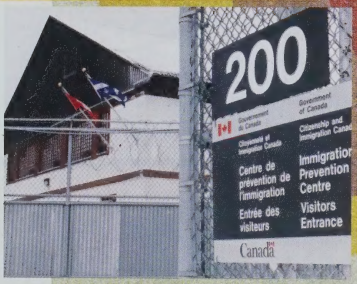
# WMS STUDY




## 2014–2015 WMS MISSION STUDY

Want to learn more about current issues that are affecting Canada and the world? Do you want to make a difference, but sometimes don't know how to start. Our 2014–2015 mission study is the perfect place!

## THIS YEAR OUR STUDY WILL INCLUDE:

- July/August 2014: What is Social Justice
- September/October 2014: Human Trafficking
- January/February 2015: Refugees
- March/April 2015: The Roma People

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Please report any errors/changes in address

# Glad Tidings

July/August 2014

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Glad Tidings

**July/August 2014**
**Volume 90, No. 4**
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**DESIGN:** Alexis McKeown

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Canada

*Glad Tidings* reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.

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# Burst Forth

by Colleen Wood

Isaiah 35 says, "The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing." (NRSV) From May 16 to19, over 600 women of The Presbyterian Church in Canada joined as a community. Some may have come from the wilderness. Some were feeling like they were living in the desert. Yet, for those four days, they were renewed and blossomed. And yes, there was much joy and singing, and even a little dancing.

When is the next
Gathering? Please sign me up.
I don't want to miss it.
~ Dineke

*Working at the registration and information desks and directing people to the workshops and forums, I was able to see the joy and excitement in people's faces as they travelled to the next event.*
*~ Joan*

## Worship

We began the event with worship on Friday, May 16. The event did begin on a dark note as we were bombarded with images showing destruction, signs of hunger, poverty, forest fires, prostitution, oil spills, and drug use. We heard the words of Isaiah 34: 1–2, "Draw near, O nations, to hear; O peoples, give heed! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it.

For the LORD is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their hordes; he has doomed them,

has given them over for slaughter." (NRSV) We were in the dry land.

But we did not stay there. Anointed Joy, a liturgical dance group from St. Andrew's, Whitby ON, moved us closer to hope, as did the lighting of our Christ candle and our time of singing.

We were blessed for the entire event to have the Rev. Dr. John Bell, from Iona Community in Scotland, leading us in our singing. From the moment he walks onto a stage, he has the ability to have any group singing in beautiful harmonies without the use of words or music. This day we sang, There is a line of women, which reminded us of all the women in the Bible, such as Shiphrah, Hannah, Martha, and Anna, who shaped history because of their love of (and hope in) God.

Our preacher on Friday was the Rev. Linda Park from St. Andrew's, Lindsay ON. She reminded us that Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of our hope, and that hope is the engine of life. It is life changing, breaks through our 'prisons,' and changes us from the inside out. Our hope rests on Jesus Christ, who has come, and will come again. She told a wonderful story of hope. She was in seminary and unsure of how she would be able to pay her bills. She would be unable to register for her next semester if she did not pay some outstanding bills. She came before God saying, you know what I need. If I don't get it, perhaps it is not to be. But the money came. It came in a beautiful but challenging way. Unknown to her, a fellow congregant had been saving money for her for almost a year. This was not a rich woman, but a very hard-working woman who ran a convenience store. She worked long and hard hours, yet had been putting money away. Linda had trouble accepting this envelope filled with cash. Yet, it was her hope. It was a gift, an incredible generous gift. It was a gift from an individual, who believed in her, and a gift from God.

As we offered our Prayers of the People in worship on Friday, we brought together participants representing different parts of the world. We had participants from our First Nations Peoples in Canada and others from Ontario, Quebec, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

Our second worship service, held on Saturday morning, saw us continue our study of Isaiah, this time focusing on Isaiah 35:3–4a. Here we

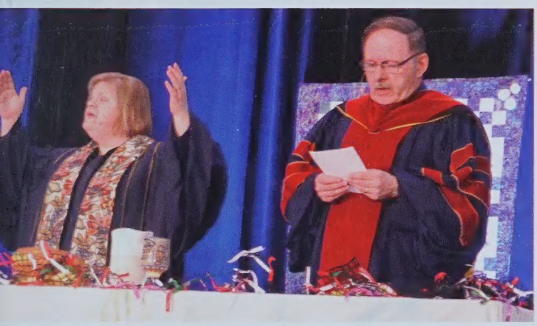
read, "Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God." (NRSV) The Rev. Kristine O'Brien gave a sermon about her recent experience with feeble knees. Having just returned from a two-week trip that included a walking pilgrimage on a trail called St. Cuthbert's Way, she had first-hand experience of blisters, purple toes, fatigue, and extreme muscle soreness. At one point her prayer became, "Lord, I will lift one foot, if you lift the other." Her days ended in band aids and pain relievers. Yet, it was during this journey, that God came to her. She had a moment where she "had a glorious, beautiful, painful rush." She was left stumbling, sobbing, and laughing all at once. She heard God say, "You are my beloved creation and I am right here with you."

She said that God came to her when her hair was wild and her feet were sore. When her hands were weak and her knees were feeble. Kristine reminded us that it is when we are weak, that we hear that voice, "Here—right here—is your God." She believes that our weakness "opens the door for God's presence."

Sunday worship was a lively one. First, we heard lively inspiration through the words of the Rev. Dr. Jean Morris. Jean asked us, "What do you hear? What do you see?" It is God bursting forth in action. God bursts forth into our life when we least expect it. Jean challenged us to accept that when God's Spirit does burst forth, strange and mysterious things happen, they burst forth. We participate by having the ears to hear and eyes to see.

Perhaps, when God bursts into our life, even Presbyterians dance. And that day we did. The Ghanaian Presbyterian Church of Toronto joined us on Sunday morning and led our offering time. It was a wonderful time of singing and dancing as we brought our gifts forward. We joyfully brought our gifts forward and those gifts totalled over $16,000. This money will be given to support Presbyterian World Service & Development work with Syrian refugees.

Our final worship service on Monday morning included the sacrament of Holy Communion. It also included the wonderful music of the Toronto Korean Children's



Choir, under the direction of Ms. Sunju Koh. Our preacher, the Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset, sent us out to Burst Forth into the world. We also welcomed the Moderator of the 139th General Assembly, the Rev. Dr. David Sutherland, who jointly led our communion time.

## Speakers

Friday afternoon, we were introduced to our keynote speaker, Dr. Samantha Nutt. Amy MacLachlan, from The Presbyterian Record, helped us get to know more about Dr. Nutt through an interview-style presentation. Dr. Nutt became a medical professional because she was interested in international health and development. She was a 24-year-old doctor when she first went to Somalia with UNICEF during the second wave of their famine. She thought, "My parents are going to kill me if I make it out of Somalia." It profoundly changed her life.

She went to Somalia thinking she would be saving lives, but one afternoon in the city of Baidoa helped her to realize the impossibility of that objective. Her job was to collect health and data on nutrition rates which would help UNICEF plan future programs. She developed questions that she asked to numerous women, who had stood in line waiting with their infants, many too malnourished to cry. When Dr. Nutt approached the next woman in line, she realized that

*I loved Rev. Karen Horst as our host for the event. She was great at adding some light relief to counter the heavy emotional sessions. John Bell's music is great, wonderfully inclusive even for us one-note wonders. Speakers were terrific. Kim Phuc's story was inspirational and very moving. Samantha Nutt was by turns funny and horrifying and wonderful.*

*~ Arline*

her baby was dead. She suddenly lost any confidence about her usefulness. When the mother spoke to the translator, Dr. Nutt could tell that she knew it was too late for her child. Through the translator, she said, "Sorry." It felt like nothing.

She found returning home especially difficult. It feels like you are betraying those who you want to help. She says she used to be a self-righteous pain in the backside every time she came home from a trip to the developing world. She admits she still can be! Dr. Nutt founded the non-profit organization War Child in 1999. The organization pioneered programming that fills the space between development work and long-term development. War Child is involved in education, justice, and opportunity (economic development).

When MacLachlan asked Dr. Nutt in what ways can you raise compassionate and generous kids, she responded that children need to be exposed to a variety of experiences. Travel is great, even if it is camping. She also encouraged parents to talk about the world and discuss ways to resolve conflict. Also, she said that many of the lessons she learned came from literature.

Friday afternoon also included a Presbyterian Church in Canada panel. Rick Fee hosted that afternoon session which included Ian McDonald, Associate Secretary for Canada Ministries; Glynis Williams, Associate Secretary for International

Ministries; Ken Kim, Director of PWS&D; Karen Plater, Associate Secretary for Stewardship; and Stephen Allen, Associate Secretary for Justice Ministries.

Dr. Nutt's second address was given on Saturday afternoon. She appreciated our theme of Burst Forth because it was a message of hope and this was her goal for this address—to leave us with hope. She does think that it is so easy to become overwhelmed especially for those of us who are committed to social justice, but as we hear about global events, she instead encouraged us to use these events to remind us why our leadership, as women, is necessary. She believes that each of us can affect change. She encouraged us to be informed and she worked to inform us that afternoon.

She told us that 82.5% of Canada's top 1% earners are men, even though women are completing post-secondary education at a higher rate than men. She pointed out that women make up 70% of the world's poor and that only 30% of girls worldwide can attend secondary school. And she reminded us that our First Nations women in Canada experience extreme levels of physical and sexual abuse, and many live in poverty.

She also informed us about the mineral coltan, which is in all our electronic devices. Coltan is found in our cell phones, computers, and video game systems. The world's largest deposits of coltan are in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and if you are a woman, it is the world's worst place to live right now. A civil war is raging in this country and it has killed the most civilians of any war since World War II. It is also a war that has scene countless young girls brutally raped and attacked. Congolese doctors who treat rape victims have found a direct correlation between the presence of coltan mines and the incidence of rape with extreme violence. This information is especially relevant to us as Canadians because we are home to 75% of the world's mining companies, yet we have no legislation to cover the acts of these companies operating outside of our borders.

Dr. Nutt also reminded us that behind all the numbers of those women living in horrific conditions around the world are stories—stories of courage and defiance. We need to hear their stories and to pay attention to them. She shared many of these stories in her two talks, but she also left us with some concrete ideas on how to make a difference.

Firstly, she encouraged us to give, but to know how to give. She reminded us that giving hard goods (food and clothing) to the developing world often causes more damage than good. In Africa, thousands of jobs have been lost in the textile industry because of the arrival of used clothing from North America. She encouraged giving to educational programming because the best determinant for a child's mortality around the world is the child's mother's access to income, which is directly tied to education. Education is a dividing line. She also spoke about programs that give micro-loans to women. Finally, the best programs have long-term relationships with international partners and work with and train local partners and communities.

Secondly, Dr. Nutt encouraged us to be more aware of our investments. For all of us who contribute to the Canadian Pension Plan, we are investing in some of the world's top weapon producers. Many provincial plans and company plans invest in these same companies. Know where your money is invested and advocate for more ethical investing.

Finally, she asked us to remember that "feminism is a process, not a history lesson." She feels that the women's movement is not completed. There are still great inequalities. Our rights are not guaranteed. And in some areas of the world, the situation

is getting worse. So, she encouraged us to "burst forth with energy, enthusiasm, and determination," to make a difference.

Our Monday morning, the keynote address was given by Kim Phuc. Kim Phuc was a young girl during the Vietnam War. Her village of Trang Bang, 30 minutes north of Saigon, was the site of the napalm bombing on June 8, 1972. Nine-year-old Kim was the girl in the now famous photograph, running naked down the street. Third-degree burns covered half of her body and she was not expected to live. Yet after two years, and countless surgeries, she returned to her village.

However, she became a national symbol of war and was supervised daily. She dreamed of being a doctor and took an opportunity to study in Cuba where she met her husband, a fellow Vietnamese student. In 1992, they were married, and during a stopover in Ghander, Newfoundland, returning from their honeymoon in Moscow, they defected.

In her early years, Kim was filled with questions such as, "Why me? Why did this happen to me?" She was angry and bitter. Kim credits her faith to changing those questions. While in a library, Kim came across a Bible. She could not stop reading it and she then attended church and became a Christian when she was 19. Her bitterness turned to love.

It was in 1996, that she had the opportunity to speak at Veteran's Day ceremony in Washington. While standing in front of the soldiers, who had destroyed her home country, and almost killed her, she expressed forgiveness. Kim radiates a sense of peace, love, and beauty as she tells her story and she is an amazing example to each of us, and truly a picture of peace. Her belief in God and in forgiveness is to be admired.

## Woman of Faith

On Sunday night, we celebrated the Presbyterian Woman of Faith event. The first Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award was given to six different recipients. The committee did not plan to choose six recipients, but they were overwhelmed with the amazing nominations, many with differing gifts and experiences, so in the end, six women of faith were chosen to be recognized.

The award winners were Dr. Lois Klempa (posthumously), Doreen McDougall (posthumously), Dr. Pauline Brown, Helen MacDonald, Rev. Helen Smith, and Dr. Margaret Taylor.

Dr. Lois Klempa studied to be a deaconess at Ewart College, but was never designated because she got married and moved to Scotland where her husband was working on his doctorate. Lois believed strongly that women were part of Christ's disciples, whether it was Mary Magdalene or the women rolling away the tomb.

Lois was a strong advocate for women in ministry. When women were first ordained to become elders and ministers, a colleague of her husband said that he was in favour of having women in the ministry, when the ministry had run out of good men. Lois responded, "With all due respect, we have run out of good men in the ministry."

Doreen McDougall used the gifts and skills she had for the good of the church and the good of others. She served as an example to other women as she stepped forward in leadership. She was an elder and had a significant role in reaching out to those who were no longer able to attend church services. Her daughter called her 'a practical old Scot' who also shared concern and care for her church building, Erskine Presbyterian Church. It was a beautiful old building and Doreen loved being involved in the maintenance and practical aspects of the church building.

Dr. Pauline Brown has received many awards over her lifetime of service, but she said this was the most meaningful. She went to India in 1951 as a young nurse with no mission experience or training. Ordinarily, professionals spent one year in the deaconess school, but Pauline never even spent that year. Pauline says she didn't know what a missionary was, but because of the nurturing of her senior colleagues and the local Bhil church leaders, she learned. She also credits the Women's Missionary Society for encouraging her to stay and work and minister in India.

Helen MacDonald has accomplished much as a lay person both within and outside the church. Her minister, Karen Horst, says that she has a gift that when people love her they trust her, and they take risks that they might not otherwise take. She is a great mentor in leadership development and has a passion for children attending church. She goes out of her way to welcome the young families within her own congregation.

Rev. Helen Smith is a child of the manse, and she learned from a young age that faith is not what you say, but what you do. Helen says, "For me, faith is a verb." Much of her ministry has been with those of little financial means, but she has gained much from them. She has also been very active serving on boards and committees

of the church, including the Life and Mission Agency.

Dr. Margaret Taylor was a pioneer in the advancement of the status of women in the PCC. She calls herself a helper, yet she was the head of the campaign to build Ewart College during a time when women were not supposed to know anything. She claims she truly didn't know much, but that she learned! Most of what she has accomplished, she credits having done that with other people. She was also the first women to chair the Assembly Board of the PCC. Her father taught her that if the church asked you to do something, the Lord would help you do it.

Saturday afternoon, participants participated in two of four different forums:

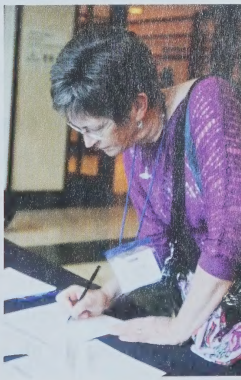
- Bursting Forth All Over: Isaiah's Vision of Healing and Reconciliation with Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls
- Bursting Into Blossoms: Tales to Cause Our Spirits to Celebrate and Flower with Rev. Olwyn Coughlin
- Just Peace Burst Forth with Nora Carmi
- Singing with the World Church with Rev. John Bell

On Sunday afternoon, participants chose from two of eleven different workshop options, including:

- A World Without Words: Art and Expression with Laurie McGugan
- Helping Churches Nurture Relationships With Those Who Experience Mental Illness with Rev. Rodger Hunter
- The Importance of Prayer in Our Spiritual Journey with Rev. In Kee Kim

*The forum, Singing with the World Church, ith Rev. John Bell, was amazing and every ne that I talked to said the same. Rev. John Bell is amazing and very talented.*

*~ Tilana*



# Great Celebration of

**Psalm 89:1-5, 15 and 16 (NRSV)**

I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

I declare that your steadfast love is established forever; your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to my servant David: 'I will establish your descendants forever, and build your throne for all generations.'"

Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones.

Happy are the people who know the festal shout, who walk, O LORD, in the light of your countenance; they exult in your name all day long, and extol your righteousness.

The Women's Missionary Society celebrated its 100th Anniversary on May 15 at the Sheraton Hotel Toronto North, Richmond Hill ON. It was a wonderful afternoon with over 300 in attendance. The afternoon began with a social time where laughter and conversation was lively and attendees also got to peruse displays from the synodicals, and the national WMS, including *Glad Tidings*. Others took a few minutes to shop at The Book Room or at various Fair Trade Vendors.

The program began with singing, We are marching, and the procession of banners from across the country. A national banner included squares from all the synodicals. After a brief welcome, we joined together in

by Colleen Wood

# a Great 100 Years!

reading Psalm 98. This Psalm was also read when the WMS was formed on May 15, 1914, in Knox Church, Toronto. Then a delicious lunch was served.

Following lunch, we enjoyed some entertainment by David Barrie, who played the bells. Then words of congratulations were brought by many, including the Rev. Dr. Rick Fee, on behalf of the Life and Mission Agency, Dr. Pauline Brown, on behalf of the former international mission staff of the WMS, and the Rev. Rosemary Doran, on behalf of the many past presidents who were present.

To help us celebrate and remember our history, Sheila Jakus wrote a wonderful poem about our history that was shared by representatives from across the country. It reminded us of our many accomplishments, and a few of our challenges.

We concluded the afternoon with a short worship service. Through the use of pictures and words, we were reminded that The Women's Missionary is a community of Christians, whose purpose, in response to the love of God in Jesus Christ, is to encourage one another and all the people of the church to be involved in local and world mission through prayer, study, service, and fellowship. We also participated in

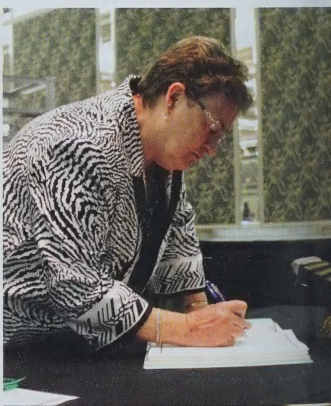
a very meaningful prayer to thank God for our past traditions, and for the wisdom and insight given to those women who formed the WMS. We also asked for forgiveness when our intentions were honourable, but perhaps our actions were not. And we prayed that our God of hope would guide us in fresh and new ways as we move forward with a renewed sense of urgency in sharing God's good news.

We closed by singing, In the bulb there is a flower.

## WMS ... One Hundred Years

One hundred years have come and gone,
And WMS is still going strong.
A Community of Christians, they are indeed
Ready to help those in need.
Focus on mission, study, and prayer,
These women are always and ever there.
To serve and support with hope and love
Given with grace from God above.
Many changes have come through the years,
Sometimes tested with heartache and tears.
So now we celebrate with pride,
Mission Work ... true and tried.
Some women amazed us with brave
decisions
Let's carry on with courage and vision.

~ Shirley Huckins, Arthur Circle
Knox, Goderich ON



by Monica McClure

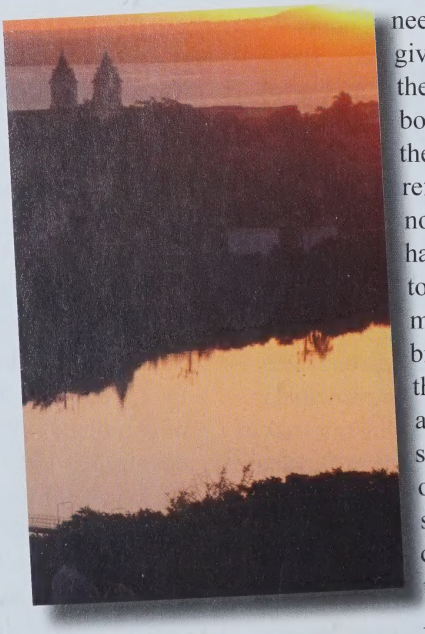
# Experiential Learning in Cuba

Twelve seminary students from Knox College recently travelled to Cuba as an important component of the theological curriculum. The purpose of the eight-day trip was to have an inter-cultural experience that brought Canadian and Cuban students and faculty together to discuss and reflect on the complexities of the Reformed Church in different cultures. This year, I was privileged to travel as part of the group along with faculty members, Dr. Charles Fensham and Dr. John Vissers, and our principal, Dr. Dorcas Gordon. During our stay in Cuba, we visited churches in Havana, Matanzas, and Varadero, and the seminary at Matanzas that hosted us. The Knox College community is very grateful for the ongoing support of the Women's Missionary Society and International Ministries of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, which subsidize this trip each year, thus making it possible to have this experiential inter-cultural learning experience.

While we were staying at the Matanzas Seminary, we participated in a two-day theological conference on the subject of "Migration" where we learned what was on the minds and hearts of our Cuban brothers and sisters. We heard first-hand that the increasing freedom of Cuban citizens to migrate from Cuba to the United States has destabilized the Cuban family and the church. The frequent migration of young people out of the country has left a great deal of pain in the psyche of the people left behind, which was palpable in the passionate discussion at the conference. Many young people have already migrated to the United States where they hope to find a better life. When they find employment, most people support their families who are left behind

in Cuba by sending home financial remittances, but their elders still feel their absence and the disruption in their families.

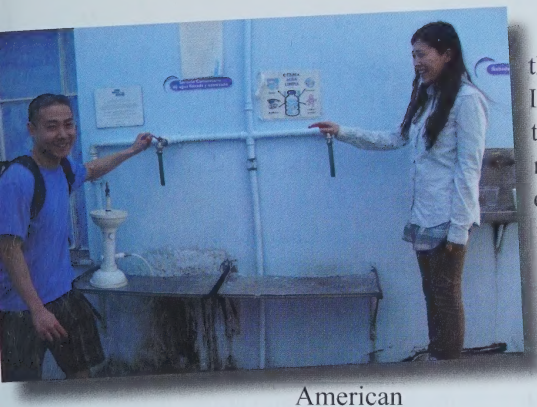
We soon discovered that when members of our Knox community asked about the what, why, and how of the Cuban context, we were often told, "It's complicated … it's complicated … it's complicated! " This was our Cuban hosts' most frequent answer of choice, whether we were asking about the confusing dual monetary system—the Cuban Peso and the Convertible Cuban Peso, or about the nationalization of the land, or trying to learn more about the Cuban family today. And it is complicated, but digging deeper into the answer that frequently followed the caveat, "It's complicated," I was intrigued by the translator's persistent use of the English word "renovate or renovation" where in Canada we might use "renew or renewal."



We were repeatedly told that the Cuban Church is undergoing a process of "renovation." The small change in nuance opened up for me a way of thinking of the ministry of the church in Cuba and also in Canada, using the metaphor of renovating a house. Renovating suggests improving, and modifying something for a reason. Most often a renovation involves keeping the same foundation, while modifying the structures above it. In the Church, the foundation is the rock of Christ (1 Peter 2:7-8). This foundation does not change, but when it comes time for renewal, new building methods, new materials, and new technology must be used in order to improve the construction and to bring the building "up to the current building code."

Drawing on this metaphor of house renovation, the Cuban Church recognizes the urgent need to "renovate" given the pressures they are facing from both outside and inside the church. Their reformed faith has not changed but they have had to adapt to the pressures of migration, changes brought about by the Revolution, and accommodation of syncretic religions of the Cuban people, some of whom continue to adhere to the beliefs of their African ancestors.

The pastors that we met were passionate about sharing their vision of the "renovation" with us. With the



American blockade still in place, and having a socialist government, there are ongoing economic and practical challenges in supporting and sustaining both individual Cuban Christians and the corporate Body of Christ and in sharing the gospel of Christ. Assistance from the churches and other Christian organizations outside of Cuba has been a great help but the people in the Cuban churches have also needed to re-evaluate themselves, articulate a vision for the church, and start the difficult process of renovation.

In response to their economic problems, the Cubans have been very creative in accessing resources for their churches, which has led to some of the renovation that we saw taking place: the Matanzas Seminary community who are actively gardening and selling their produce and also providing space for individuals to sell their crafts; and the rural church at Cuatro Esquinas (the Four Corners) in raising pigs, growing a mustard seed crop, and producing sesame seed oil for sale to the hospitals are some examples. In addition, I was surprised to see the local church in Varadero had rentable accommodation and an outdoor café two blocks from the beach! This creative idea to repurpose some rooms to meet the needs of others and offer Christian hospitality to strangers certainly was unique! As the hands and feet of God in Cuba, it is heartening that the Christians have become very much an integral part of each community where they are located. I noticed at the seminary that many people were working to care for the grounds, the gardens, the kitchen, and the residences, and that there was even someone picking the stones out of the rice! Providing both work and food for vulnerable people is an intentional ministry of the Christian Community at the seminary.

The Living Water for the World project, sponsored by the Presbyterian Church in the USA in cooperation with many Christian partners around the world, was one of the most interesting ideas that we saw in Cuba. Living Waters for the World provides sustainable clean water for communities, and builds long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between volunteers and communities in need. Living Waters for the World addresses the world's water crisis by treating the community's available, but unclean water source, using a filtration system located in an institutional setting such as at

the local churches. At the church at Cuatro Esquinas, the pastor showed us how the water filtration system works. It supplies 300 gallons of water a day to over 2,000 neighbours in their small rural community. The neighbours just bring along water containers to the church and fill them up free of charge. The Matanzas Seminary also runs a similar project for the people in their community, as does the Martin Luther King Centre in Havana. This project also provides a wonderful bridge for the church to be involved in the community in a meaningful and life-giving spiritual way by introducing people to the life giving water of our Saviour Jesus Christ. (John 4:13–15)

In Cuba, the metaphor of water is particularly compelling because it is both a necessity of life and a scarce commodity, and it is therefore both protected and respected. It is symbolic that the church is the place where Cuban people can receive life-giving water for both physical and spiritual health. My trip to Cuba has opened my eyes to the importance of the church being the Body of Christ in the world. I am grateful to have seen the Body of Christ visible in so many different ways in Cuba. Now that I am home in Canada, I have more time to reflect on my own understanding of Christian mission in the world. In terms of providing leadership within the Canadian church, I believe that the time for "renovation" is now. Beginning with the reformed theology of "reformed and always reforming" is a good place to start. We would ask for your prayers for the Christian Church in Cuba and also for the students at Knox College in Canada that we might continue to experience more about what it means to be the hands and feet of God in the world.

*Monica is a retired teacher, who has just completed her second year in the MDiv program at Knox College in Toronto. She went to Cuba with her classmates as part of the inter-cultural component of their studies.*

# A Meal Fit for a King

**Then God said, I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.** Genesis 1:29

by L. June Stevenson

Jasmine awoke to the warm sunlight pouring in her window. Her husband had already gone to work. She should have made him tea before he left, like a good wife, but they were newlyweds, and he had graciously let her sleep in. She sat up in bed excitedly. They had only been married for a week and she had yet to make a home cooked meal. Today she would shop and cook and surprise Josh when he came home from his work in the fields.

Jasmine and Joshua lived in Bethlehem. She would walk to Market Square to purchase the supplies she needed. Cooking in those days was very different from today. There were no refrigerators or freezers. Food had to be fresh and that meant shopping almost every day.

Of course, in those days, there wasn't the variety of foods we have filling the shelves of our grocery stores. Foods were plain and unadorned. Many ate their food raw which was a benefit to their health. There were no modern day stoves or barbeques. Some cities actually had bakers, but most families cooked over hot stones or clay. Lentils, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, dates, nuts, and fish were readily available, and unlike our food today they provided proper and satisfying nutrition without excess fats or cholesterol.

During my time in the Holy Land we stopped outside Bethlehem where I bought dates and oranges. I have never tasted any fruit so delicious. The oranges left no residue on your fingers and the dates were plump and moist.

Spices were used not only to flavour foods but to take away the taste of meat that was going off. A spice is a dried seed, fruit, root, bark or vegetative substance used in nutritionally insignificant quantities

as a food additive for flavour, colour, or as a preservative. Spices are distinguished from herbs which are leafy, green plant parts used for flavouring such as basil, mint, and parsley.

Jasmine and her husband liked their food fresh. She would go down to the market for a fish caught that morning and then look for spices. She would choose wisely and carefully as some spices were very costly having come all the way to Palestine from India, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Persia, Egypt, and Sri Lanka.

She needed cumin and fresh parsley, and perhaps some bay leaves (called *ezrah* in the Scriptures). She looked forward to the day she would have her own spice and herb garden and be able to stroll outside and pick whatever she needed. One day she might even have saffron, one of the most expensive plants. She had heard of its delicate flavour and fragrance used not only in food but as a perfume.

*Song of Songs*, that beautiful love poem in the Bible, celebrates the beauty of nature and the scent of perfumes and spices. It speaks of saffron, pomegranates, vineyards in bloom, apple and fig trees, and raisins. In one particularly erotic passage in Chapter 4 the lover exults in his bride's garden where choice fruits, spices, and herbs abound. These are meant to appeal to the senses and increase the passion of the lovers.

After she had bathed and dressed, Jasmine ground enough grain and started preparing the fresh fire flat bread she would cook later. She then checked her food supply. There was plenty of olive oil if needed for cooking or dipping. A few bottles of red wine had been left over from the wedding reception. A rope of garlic hung from the ceiling. It would be used as a vegetable. Safely tucked behind some clay cups was a small tightly sealed container of pepper which her uncle had given her as a wedding gift. Uncle Nathan had good friends in the spice trade and pepper, the oldest used spice known, was literally worth its weight in gold.

Just before Josh came home and the dinner was cooking Jasmine scented the room with incense. One of their wedding gifts had been a box of costly aromatic spices for the young couple to enjoy. This was just the kind of special occasion to use it. She set the low table with the new dishes from her wedding, putting the wine goblets beside them. They would begin with flat bread and hummus, made from beans, lemon, garlic and olive oil, along with a dipping sauce of oil and spices.

Jasmine was especially pleased with the main course: a large platter of grilled fish stuffed with cilantro, garlic, and red peppers and marinated in a mixture of coriander, red peppers, cumin (sometimes spelled cummin, and referred to in Scripture

as *kamon*), and chopped onions. A sprig of parsley would garnish the fish. They would eat out of the same bowl using their fingers as was the custom.

Coriander, cilantro, and cumin were among the most available spices of the day. Other commonly used spices were cinnamon, anise, nutmeg, mace, and calamus, an aromatic perennial herb. Cinnamon was said to open up and tone the intestines.

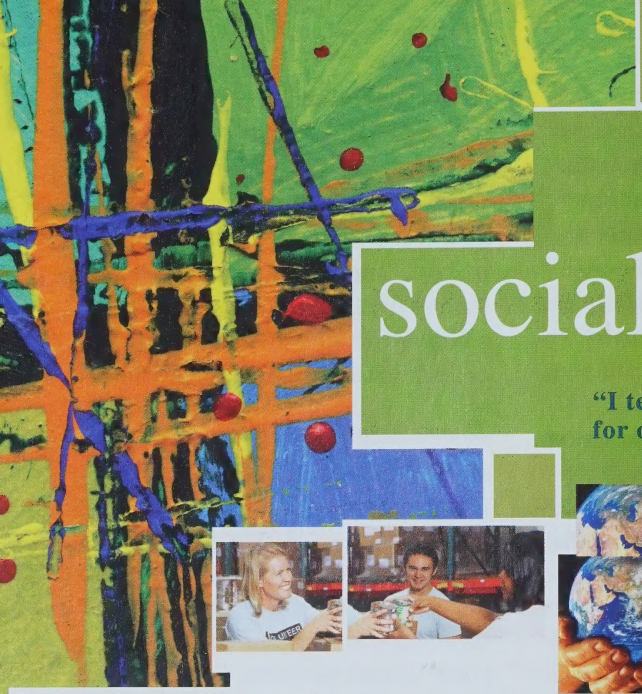
For vegetables, Jasmine had cooked the two artichokes her mother had brought to her yesterday along with cloves of garlic.

Desert would be a bowl of dried fruits and nuts. Figs, dates, raisins, almonds, and pistachios. Another time Jasmine would make the desert special, perhaps on a day when Josh got paid and they had a little extra money. They might even travel to the bustling market in Jerusalem and buy sweet pastries of baklava, dripping with honey.

Joshua's face lit up when he returned to their humble home and saw the table setting. After he had washed up he poured the wine and gave a toast. "To my beautiful bride," he said, "and to this wonderful meal she has prepared. It is truly fit for a king." The look in his eyes was enough reward for Jasmine's efforts.

*Thanks to the programs of the church and the generosity of the Women's Missionary Society, I went to Bethlehem in 1997 for a conference. I truly enjoyed the food, especially the breakfasts. Each morning a cold breakfast was laid out for participants: tomatoes, lettuce, olives, hard boiled eggs, and a kind of bread. I imagined Jesus and his disciples sitting under a tree for their mid-day break tasting the same things. It seemed so natural. Thus my interest in how people ate in Jesus' time and the spices and herbs they used. This time my article is in story form.*

**A spice is a dried seed, fruit, root, bark or vegetative substance used in nutritionally insignificant quantities as a food additive for flavour, colour or as a preservative. Spices are distinguished from herbs which are leafy, green plant parts used for flavouring such as basil, mint, and parsley.**



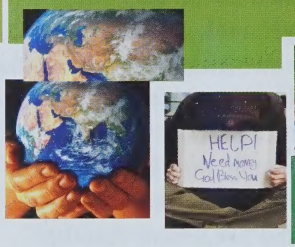
WHAT I

# social justice

**"I tell you the truth, whatever you for one of the least of these sisters brothers of mine, you did for m**

**Matthew 2**





by Vivian B

*This is the first of four mission studies on the topic of social justice. The following sessions are planned:*

**Human Trafficking**
in September/ October 2014 edition

**Refugees**
in January/February 2015 edition

**The Plight of the Roma People**
in May/June 2015 edition

## Opening Prayer

Pray for injustices in our communities, our country, and the world:

> Dear Lord, you are a just God, and a God who loves all people equally. You call us to do the same by feeding the hungry, slaking the thirsty, inviting the stranger in, clothing the needy, helping the sick, and visiting those in prison. Help us not to be overwhelmed by the needs of those around us and around the world. Help us to know how to pray and to know what to do in our individual lives and circumstances. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

## Introduction

Victoria sat on the floor of her small, dark house and told us about her life, yet she couldn't tell us much. She and her husband, Juan, worked and lived on a banana plantation in Guatemala. She had to be careful not to complain too much because her family depended on the banana plantation, and the plantation owners had sent a representative to show us around. I

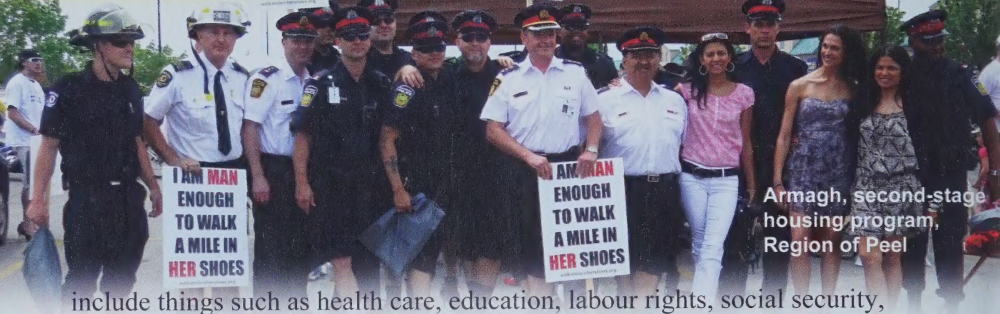
climate change

feminization of poverty

was with a small group of North Americans, and the plantation owners wanted us to know that they were doing the right thing.

But what I saw that day made me feel physically sick. The representative pointed out that the plantation owners had built a small school for the children to attend for a few hours a day, but there were no children in the school when we visited. The youngest children hung around outside, while the older ones were working in the fields. The children we saw were malnourished and obviously had little or no medical care. A few had physical deformities. They were naked or dressed in only one article of ragged clothing. Victoria spoke about living in a vicious cycle of poverty. A life that she wished her children could escape. There was never enough food for the whole family. Her husband worked extremely long hours, and he had little protection from the pesticides. I felt helpless. And even if I had given Victoria food for that one day, I wouldn't have been able to change the system or free her family from that cycle of poverty. Social justice has to do with changing systems and creating a society that provides equal access to education, health care, labour rights, and a clean environment.

Social justice as a concept was first developed by Christians. An Italian Jesuit scholar, Luigi Taparelli D'Azeglio, coined the term in the 1840s, and it was further developed by theologians. It emerged as a secular concept in the late twentieth century. As a secular concept, social justice is based on the idea that all humans are equal and that we need to work towards creating an egalitarian society and institutions. It includes looking after the least advantaged members of society and also working to ensure that everyone—regardless of gender, race, class, age, disability or other factors—has equal access to liberties, rights, and opportunities. These opportunities and rights



Armagh, second-stage housing program, Region of Peel

include things such as health care, education, labour rights, social security, public services, progressive taxation, and a clean environment.[i]

If social justice is disconnected from our relationship with God, it becomes an idea grounded in a moral imperative. As Christians, we need to be reminded that our social justice actions must flow out of our understanding of who God is, and our relationships with God and with those around us. When social justice becomes a project or a duty and is disconnected from relationships, then we lose sight of the reasons we are called to social justice.

The concept of social justice is prevalent throughout the Bible; it is a theme in both the Old and New Testaments. Tim Keller points out that it is a significant part of God's identity, "the Biblical writers introduce God as 'a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows' (Psalm 68:4-5). This is one of the main things He does in the world. He identifies with the powerless. He takes up their cause."[ii] Social justice is based on God's love for all people (and particularly those who are most vulnerable). It is also based on the life and words of Jesus Christ, and our call as Christians to serve the poor and vulnerable.

*The Old Testament*

The Old Testament speaks of a God of justice. The psalmist writes, "The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love" (Psalm 33:5), and "He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, and the justice of your cause like the noonday sun" (Psalm 37:6). The Hebrew word for justice is 'mishpat', and it occurs in various forms throughout the Hebrew Old Testament. It means to treat people equitably, including in punishment. People are to be punished on the merits of the case, regardless of race or social status. Mishpat also means to care for and protect the cause of the vulnerable, which today would include people such as widows, orphans, immigrants, refugees, the poor, the homeless, many single parents, and elderly people.[iii]

Social justice goes beyond the concept of justice—what is morally right or fair. Most societies seek justice in courts of law and respect certain human rights; however, our relationship



"Justice involves protecting the rights of others. It protests against everything that destroys human dignity."

with God calls us to seek something more. We are to love our neighbour as ourself and work to create social systems that reflect that love.

We first hear the idea of loving our neighbour as ourself in Leviticus 19:18, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighour as yourself. I am the LORD." The Old Testament establishes a strong relationship between helping the vulnerable and oppressed: "[a]ccording to Isaiah 58, true worship called for releasing the yoke of injustice and letting the oppressed go free. It required sharing bread with the hungry and bringing the homeless into one's own house!"[iv] Deuteronomy 24 makes stipulations about the debts of the poor. If a loan is made to a man who is poor, then the one making the loan is instructed not to go to sleep at night with what the poor man has provided as a pledge but to return it to him by sunset. Also, "Do not take advantage of a hired man who is poor and needy, whether he is a brother Israelite or an alien living in one of your towns. Pay him his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it." (Deut 24:14–15) The Old Testament also instructs farmers to leave some of their crops for the widow, the fatherless, and the alien. "When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless, and the widow. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt." (Deut 24: 21–22)

Many Old Testament scriptures on which we base our ideas about social justice are a reminder to the Israelites that their freedom came through a relationship with the God who saved them. Because God brought them out of slavery, they are to remember what it was like to be oppressed and poor and in slavery, and consequently to treat others who are poor or oppressed or in slavery with

Luke 4:18

***The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.***

justice and compassion. The Israelites' concept of social justice flowed out of their relationship with God.

*The New Testament*

Our call to social justice as Christians must be rooted in our understanding of Christ's love. Christ calls us to love one another as he loves us and to love our neighbour as ourself. We must experience that love—a love that has nothing to do with our worth—in order to understand the concept of social justice, which has nothing to do with the recipient's merit. It is based on the equality of all people. We are told in Luke chapter 6 to give to everyone who asks, to love our enemies and do good to them, and to do to others as we would have them do to us. Rather than being based on human character or qualities, this call is based on the character of God, "Then … you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:35, 36) In many ways, it is also true that this type of behaviour is impossible without the strength of God. It is not dependent on the merit of the giver *or* the receiver; instead, it is wholly dependent upon the character and strength of God and our ability to draw from that strength in order to act in our own lives.

## Biblical Reflection

> **"It always seems impossible until it's done."**
>
> **Nelson Mandela**

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12–27

- After having read the introduction, does this passage mean anything new to you? How does it relate to our call to work at social justice?
- Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the needs of the world? Have you ever felt alone in your attempts at social justice? Does it help you to remember that we are called to be part of a body?

Read Acts 4:32–34

- As Canadians, we share with those in need through our tax system, which provides public health care, public education, and many other services to people in need. By

**Most good things have been said far too many times and just need to be lived.**

**Shane Claiborne**

tithing, we share with people in our churches and around the world. In many ways, the WMS has reflected this passage by working as a group, a body, to do what no individual could do on her own. Do you feel that this passage asks more of you than tithing and paying taxes?

Read Matthew 25:31–45

When I lived in Toronto as a university student, I passed many homeless people on the street. One day, I walked by some guys sitting on the street who were my age. I struck up a conversation with them. They had recently moved to Toronto. I asked them if I could buy them some food (instead of giving them money), and they were very appreciative. I returned with some sandwich meat and a loaf of bread. We shared a humorous moment when I asked if they needed a knife to open the meat package (of course, they had knives). This moment was different from other times in my life when I've given money to people on the street. It was memorable. These young men showed genuine gratitude for what I had done, and we seemed to share a mutual respect for each other.

- Have you had a moment in your life when you felt that you did something for someone and you could see Christ in that person while serving them?
- Some people argue that we should give money to organizations that help people instead of giving directly to people on the street. What do you think? Should we give to people on the street? Is this social justice?

Complete these questions, based on your discussion of the above questions. Try to give several answers to each question.

1. God is a God who …
2. Human beings are/should …
3. The relationship between God and human beings is/should be …
4. The relationship among human beings is/should be …

## What are some of the Key Social Justice Issues of our day?

Social justice is a far-reaching concept, touching on many aspects of our lives, including health care, taxation, corporate responsibility, domestic and global poverty, refugees, climate change and more. What are the most pressing issues of today? Three related and important social justice issues today are the growing gap between the rich and poor, the continuing feminization of poverty, and climate change.

Amidst the deluge of bad news we often hear, there is some good news. The number of people living in extreme poverty is decreasing worldwide. According to the United Nations, some Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)[v]—such as halving the proportion of people living on less than $1.25 a day relative to 1990— have been met ahead of time. From 2000 to 2012, all countries increased their Human Development Index[vi] value and accelerated their achievements in the education, health, and income dimensions.[vii]

These increases have been worldwide and in countries such as Uganda, Ghana, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, China, and Brazil; however, the increases have not benefited all people. Across the globe, the rich are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer. In fact, the richest 85 people in the world now own the same amount as the bottom half of the world's population (3.5 billion people).[viii] On February 20 of this year—the World Day for Social Justice—the United Nations' Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said, "The gap between the poorest and the wealthiest around the world is wide and growing. This situation is not only between countries but within them, including many of the most prosperous."[ix] Economic inequality is a huge concern, partly because it disproportionately affects women.

The feminization of poverty is increasing. The wealth generation of the past decade has benefited men more than women. Not only is the gap between the rich and poor widening, the gap between women and men has continued to widen.[x] "Worldwide, women earn on average slightly more than 50 per cent of what men earn."[xi]

Climate change is a major social justice issue that is significantly affecting the livelihood and health of many people in the Global South. There is now a scientific consensus that climate change is happening and is caused by human activities. The science is proven.[xii] The impacts are already being felt around the world. As Christians, we believe that "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for God founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters." (Psalm 24:1–2) Climate change is an issue of inequality because decisions made by people living in developing countries have significant impacts on the lives of those living in developed countries, yet developing countries are far less able to cope with the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather events, drought, and rising sea levels. The Presbyterian Church in Canada states, in its Social Action Handbook, "Global climate is a public good. This confers stewardship responsibilities upon all of humanity, especially those who live in countries that produce a disproportionate share of greenhouse gases. The ethics of climate change adaptation imply strong support from wealthy countries to countries that are least able to adapt to climate change, particularly in the Global South."[xiii]

# What our church is doing

Our Church is active in work related to social justice. Much, if not all, of the work of Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D), the development and relief agency of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, is related to social justice. The WMS is also involved in social justice work within Canada and around the world. Also, through our congregational giving to *Presbyterians Sharing*, we support many diverse social justice issues such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and numerous initiatives and centres across Canada. For example, Toronto's Evangel Hall Mission feeds, clothes, and finds shelter for up to 200 men and women in downtown Toronto. Also through *Presbyterians Sharing*, the church supports seven ministries that focus on Aboriginal Peoples in Canada. One such ministry is the Kenora Fellowship Centre, which provides sanctuary and hospitality for those marginalized and alienated by poverty and addiction and works with legal services, detoxification programs, street patrol, and other essential services in the community. Our local churches also take part in social justice issues, such as sponsoring refugees, providing food banks and meals for the hungry, and working to end homelessness.

## Closing Prayer

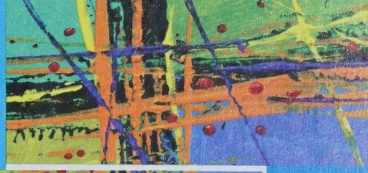
Jesus, help us to see you when we see those in need. Help us to remember that whatever we do for the least of these sisters and brothers, we do for you. We pray for a renewed relationship with you that will strengthen us to love others as you love us. We pray for equality in our world. Help governments and other leaders around the world to close the growing gap between the rich and the poor. We pray for women living in poverty. We pray that systems will change and allow them and their children to break the cycle of poverty that they now live in. We pray for the addicts, the migrant workers, the refugees, for those in war-torn areas of the world, and for those who are suffering from the impacts of climate change. We pray for the poor in our cities and communities. Help us to serve the least of these with your love and justice. Amen.

(Consider ending your time together by singing hymn #709, What does the Lord require of you?)

# Going Deeper

**Read Isaiah 58:6–10**

- Find one or two things in this passage that you are interested in working on, and write out a wish list for yourself. For example, I am interested in migrant workers in my city, and I would like to do something, even if it is very small, to help them. I am also interested in climate change and helping people in developing countries who are suffering from climate change impacts such as food shortages due to extreme weather events. So, my wish is this:
  1. I want to help provide for "the poor wanderer" (migrant workers) in my city.
  2. I want to help loose the chains of injustice caused by climate change by helping people in developing countries who are suffering from climate change impacts.
- Then talk about how you might implement these things. For example, for my first wish, I know a woman in my church who has been working on helping migrant workers in our city, so I should talk to her to learn more about what I might be able to do.
- When you think about doing these things, what are some of the barriers you face?
- Do you expect rewards from God for your actions? Do you think "your light will break forth like the dawn" or "your healing will quickly appear"? Should we expect rewards from God?
- What should motivate us to do social justice?



[i] Matthew Robinson, "What is Social Justice." Appalachian State University. Department of Government and Justice Studies. http://gjs.appstate.edu/social-justice-and-human-rights/what-social-justice

[ii] Tim Keller, "What is Biblical Justice?" *Relevant Magazine*. http://www.relevantmagazine.com/god/practical-faith/what-biblical-justice#2roylcHShJoUiqWx.99

[iii] *Ibid.*

[iv] Arthur Van Seters, "Evangelical Faith and the Radical Compassion of Love for the World," *Social Action Handbook*, 4th ed. Gail V. Turner (ed.) (Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Life and Mission Agency, 2004), p.V. Revised for the 139th General Assembly (2013).

[v] The eight Millennium Development Goals, which have a target date of 2015, form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. The eight goals are to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality rates; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development. http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

[vi] The United Nations' Human Development Index is a composite statistic of measures including life expectancy at birth, education and income.

[vii] United Nations, *Human Development Report 2013*, (New York: United Nations, 2013). http://hdr.undp.org/en/2013-report .

[viii] Oxfam, "Working for the Few: Political Capture and Economic Inequality," 178 Oxfam Briefing Paper Summery, 20 January 2014. http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/bp-working-for-few-political-capture-economic-inequality-200114-summ-en.pdf

[ix] United Nations, "World Day for Social Justice: UN urges action to end poverty, overcome inequality," UN News Centre. http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47180&Cr=Inequality&Cr1=#.UyH5Hfk7uSo

[x] United Nations, *Commission on the Status of Women Report on the Fifty-Fourth Session* (13 March and 14 October 2009 and 1-12 March 2010). Economic and Social Council Official Records, 2010 Supplement No. 7. (New York: United Nations, 2010).

[xi] United Nations, "The Feminization of Poverty," http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/fs1.htm

[xii] See, for example, the most recent reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Also, for anyone who doubts the validity of the science, or the seriousness of the issue, see Hayhoe, Katharine and Farley, Andrew, *A Climate for Change: Global Warming Facts for Faith-Based Decisions*, (Faithwords, 2009). According to https://www.skepticalscience.com/global-warming-scientific-consensus-advanced.htm there is a 97% consensus amongst the peer-reviewed scientific literature and experts regarding human-induced climate change.

[xiii] The Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Social Action Handbook*, 4th ed. Gail V. Turner (ed.) (Toronto: The Presbyterian Church in Canada, Life and Mission Agency, 2013), p.203.

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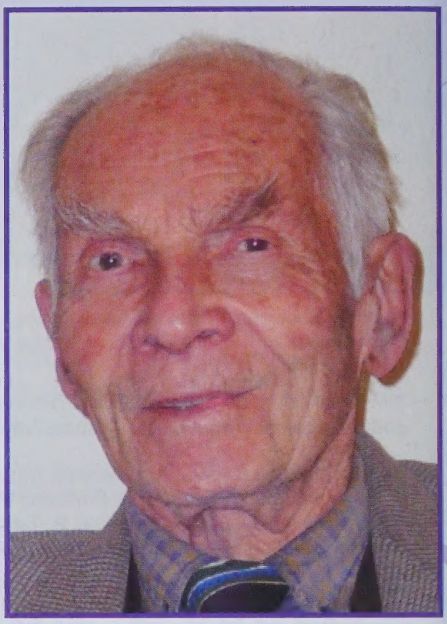

Dr. Ronald Bremner was a dermatologist in Saskatoon where he was a long-serving elder and Sunday School teacher at St. Andrew's Church. In 1999, he acquired a single-life gift annuity for $30,000, which he designated for PWS&D. In return for his gift, Ron received:

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# The WMS ... Did You Know?

During our Council Executive meetings, much work is accomplished. There is joy, celebration, learning, prayer, and sometimes mourning. Decisions are made. Below you will find a letter from our national president outlining some of the significant changes that were made at our May Council Executive meeting.

**Dear sisters and brothers of the WMS:,**
**Re: Update from Council Executive**

Greetings from the Council Executive! We just finished three days of meetings at Wynford Drive from May 12 to 15. It was a time of much reporting, discussing, and decision-making.

I am writing this letter as a follow-up to the letter I sent back in March about the changes proposed at our last council meeting and the PCW. I hope to also bring you up to date on some decisions which were made at Council Executive.

PCW

After hearing the report of the group that travelled the country to speak about the PCW, Council Executive considered the various possibilities that were presented. After careful consideration, they chose the following option:

Remain as WMS without the PCW umbrella but implement the new ideas which were developed for the PCW: 1) Create a database of all WMS members to be used for better communication and 2) Do more online networking using the Internet. This means the WMS can continue on but we will be making efforts to grow the organization with newly developed ideas for our times. It will be a new part of the structure of the WMS, whether it is called the PCW or another name that would reflect this new addition to the WMS structure. Adding a new arm would be similar to congregations having traditional worship services and contemporary worship services as well to accommodate the next generation; the traditional ways of doing things would be kept while the new ways would be added. The new ways will be the outreach ministry arm of the WMS.

Two ideas that came out of brainstorming and confirmed by the Council Executive were:

1. That we create a database of all WMS members to help improve communication and to keep connected with members whose groups/ presbyterials have disbanded.
2. That we develop online membership and programming, providing online resources and networking for women across the country and around the world.

Book Room Closure

Council Executive made the very difficult decision to close The Book Room by the end of June 2015. As much as our members, and the whole church for that matter, appreciate the services of The Book Room, we were faced with financial reports which showed that it was a money-losing endeavour. Our Book Room has done well compared to other church bookstores that closed a few years ago—the United Church, Anglican Church, and Mitchell's. Also, we heard reports of various branches of Chapters closing as well as the World's Largest Bookstore in downtown Toronto. Susan Clarke has been doing a tremendous job but as she herself says, "The writing is on the wall;" more and more people are purchasing books directly through companies like Amazon. Also, the print industry is diminishing and fewer people are buying paper books. Our decision coincides well with the plans of the Resource Centre side of the PCC as they are also looking at potential changes in 2015.

Staff Changes

After two years of working as the Administrative Assistant for the WMS office, Alana Martin will be finishing her job at the end of June 2014. Alana will be pursuing further studies to develop her career. We wish Alana well in her studies and future career.

The WMS will not be filling the Administrative Assistant position. Elza Furzer will return as Financial Officer, working on average one day per week to process all financial matters. Alexis McKeown will increase her work-week to four days per week to take on some of the administrative functions. She will share the work with Sarah Kim. Colleen Wood will continue as Editor of *Glad Tidings* on a part-time basis as before.

With the reduction in staffing and staff time, the WMS office may not always have a staff person readily available to answer your calls or to greet you if you drop by. The staff will do their best to have someone in the office but we hope you understand if the office is sometimes empty.

All the above is a reflection of the changing times that we live in. The WMS has done well for 100 years; if we want to see it continue for another 100 years we need to be alert to the times and make the necessary changes. Please keep the WMS in your prayers for guidance and new vision. I know that with faith in God and all of your prayers we can continue to serve the Church and make lives around the world better.

In Christ,

Betty Siverns, President, WMS

# Mission in Action

**David and Anna Pandy-Szekeres**
**Eastern Europe**
*Update on the Situation in the Ukraine*

The events in Ukraine during the last three weeks of March have captured front page headlines in most of the Western media. There is nothing much surprising in these recent events if you know the political history of Ukraine since 1991, when it became a full-fledged country for the first time in its history. The boundaries of the new country created many potential difficulties as they encompassed peoples of very different ethnicities, language groups, histories and political cultures. Ukraine is also strategically positioned between Russia and the most easterly extension of the European Union and NATO. Influences, direct or indirect, originating from each of these sides have regularly mixed or butted against each other here since 1991.

Ukraine governments have not made much progress in eradicating widespread corruption nor have they been able to successfully manage the economy. Both the EU and Russia have made offers of economic assistance, but with their own interests in mind. Russia is wary


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## Overseas Staff Birthdays

**August**
9 – Paul McLean, Taiwan

**September**
16 – Denise van Wissen, Nicaragua

of losing political and economic influence in an area immediately adjacent to its borders, but also of the potential extending of NATO's military presence. The West envisions gaining economic access to a market of 46-million inhabitants as well as perhaps further limiting Russian clout on the world stage. Seen in this context, the present situation is nothing more than another chapter in the struggle for global power by the world's major players, and it can only be hoped that they will resolve this in a peaceful way.

Nothing much of this has been felt in the area where I work, in the country's most westerly *oblast* (region) of Transcarpathia, except for the aggressive appearance of organized units from the Lviv *oblast*, supposedly representing the new authority in Kiev and temporarily seizing government buildings and disrupting the work of civil servants and elected bodies. A few administrative officials, who have had too close a relationship with the now disbanded political party of the discredited president, have resigned from their posts while others have remained, now functioning as "independents." For the ethnically mixed population of Transcarpathia (Hungarians, Romanians, Slovakians, Russians, and Ukrainians), neither the Russian line nor the Western-backed nationalist Ukrainian line is overly enticing or reassuring. A system offering a little more democracy, autonomy, and economic improvement with less corruption is what is needed. For the present, this is perhaps only a dream. For the ethnic minority within the Reformed Church of sub-Carpathian Ukraine, the PCC's partner church in this country, there is little to do except to pray for a better future.

**Todd and Annika Statham**
**Blantye Synod, Malawi**
*In the Days of Israel*

It was one of those days when Bible stories came alive around me. One Sunday morning, I was driving to a colleague's congregation in the countryside outside Zomba. He had asked me to preach and celebrate the Lord's Supper in his little church of 150 people. We turned off the tarmac road onto a narrow dirt track that wound its ways around—and sometimes right through fields and settlements. A few hundred meters off the road a lorry with the insignia of a Scandinavian government blazoned on its doors was parked under a blue gum tree. Large sacks of maize were being unloaded under the watchful eye of an overseer, as a crowd of

people with small burlap sacks in hand formed an unruly line to get their share. Here, villagers' fields are still a month away from harvest, but the hunger was already evident. Just a few nights before, I had read to my kids at bedtime of a world they had never known until we moved to Malawi.

"Then Egypt's seven good years came to an end and the seven years of famine arrived, just as Joseph had said ….As the famine got worse all over the country, Joseph opened the storehouses and sold emergency supplies to the Egyptians. The famine was very bad. Soon the whole world was coming to buy supplies from Joseph" (Genesis 41:53–57).

*Sundown over the Lower Shire Valley*

As our pickup truck forded a small creek, two young boys ran in front, driving a dozen goats down to the water. One of them abruptly stopped, turned and scampered back to poke his stick at a kid who was struggling to keep up. So that's what a good shepherd does, I thought to myself. His rod and staff they comfort me. We arrived at the brick church. Tombstones were scattered around the church, partly covered by long grass. A few small mossy stones showed where children had been laid to rest. One-year-old. Two-year-old. Three-year-old. "No more babies dying in the cradle, or old people who don't enjoy a full lifetime," spoke the prophet. "One–hundredth birthdays will be considered normal—anything less will seem like a cheat." (Isaiah 65:20) Folks in central Africa are still waiting for this to come true.

The worship service began and I preached via an interpreter. I really did try my best, but as usual, my jokes were met with silence and the congregation chuckled at all the

Sundown over the Lower Shire Valley

wrong places. Thank God that his presence and power can bind the pulpit and the pew, however different the people in them may be! During the Lord's Supper the congregation droned in Chichewa: "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." I thought of the goat carcass I'd just seen hanging in a kiosk at the highway turnoff. Freshly slaughtered, blood was still draining from its throat as the butcher quickly skinned it amidst a swarm of flies. Is this gore what the Bible means when it talks of the "lamb of God" and not the fluffy white lamb I have had in my head since childhood?

After the service, I spoke to an old man who told me that he had a son about my age. He shook his head sadly. A few years earlier, his son had rented out the fields his father had left him and he then fled across a few borders to South Africa. He had not been seen since. We drove back to Zomba with the radio news full of the latest scandal (called "Cashgate") involving high-ranking government officials and a whole lot of disappeared aid and development money. Crooked politicians and helpless widows; women at the well; famine and food handouts; good shepherds and lost sheep. Sometimes Malawi feels like the days of Israel. A land where grey-haired fathers sit on the frontstep and wait for their prodigal sons to come back from Johannesburg.


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## Synodical

**British Columbia** Synodical's 100th Anniversary Meeting was a joyous occasion. We remembered the amazing women, who made the organization possible with a poem and skit. Betty Siverns, Joan Smith, Sarah Kim, and Janet Brewer, some of our council executive members, were present to answer questions about future plans for WMS. (Other distinguished guests, who are active in Westminster Presbyterial, were Beth McIntosh and Joyce Davis. Tam Corbett was not able to be present.)

Our guest speaker was the Rev. Dr. Nancy Cocks, who taught us a new song from John Bell of the Iona Community in Scotland. Linda Inglis also led some lively singing.

With God's leading, we march confidently into the future.

-Sheila Jakus

Niagara Presbyterial hosted the 67th **Southwestern Ontario** Synodical meeting in St.Andrew's Church, Welland ON, with the theme, Pass It On, from April 22 to 23.

Rev. Barbara McGale conducted opening worship, a communion service, and dedicated a banner representing the presbyterials in our synodical. It will be displayed at The Presbyterian Women's Gathering in May.

Rev. Margaret Robertson, our guest speaker on Tuesday, spoke on ways to pass our faith on to our children and grandchildren. Spencer Edwards, Youth and Family Ministry Consultant, continued the theme on Wednesday with his topic, Pass It On: Grandparent Edition.

A delegation from the WMS Council Executive gave a report on the progress of expanding Presbyterian Church Women and the Women's Missionary Society.

Two young enthusiastic women—Colleen Wood, Editor of *Glad Tidings*, and Alexis McKeown, Program and Communications Coordinator for the WMS also spoke. Colleen told about her trip to India with a group of 11 WMS members to open a dormitory for students at the Jobat school. They also highlighted the need to encourage members to welcome all generations into our churches and groups.

Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee reported on Camp Kintail and the offering was given to assist children attending the camp.

Rev. Margaret Robertson conducted the election of officers and the Rev. Sarah Kim led the installation service. Shirley Aitcheson, outgoing president, was thanked for her leadership and presented with a gift by the new president, Shirley Miller.

## Presbyterial

**Maitland** Presbyterial celebrated 100 years with a special evening held

Maitland Presbyterial: Co-president, Betty Johnson; Jo English; Co-president, Nancy McIntyre

at South Kinloss on May 12 with the theme, Celebrating the Past and Looking to the Future. Sixty-five ladies sat down to a delicious salad supper. We were given an inspiring acrostic book mark with words written by Co-president, Betty Johnson.

Marilynne Gilchrist and Wilma Clarke led an enthusiastic sing-song. Co-president Nancy McIntyre constituted the meeting and opened with prayer. Donna Sutton, President of South Kinloss WMS, welcomed everyone. There was recognition of special members, including past presidents and two women over 90 years of age. Kincardine WMS led the worship which included a women's ensemble as well as a skit (dressed in period costume) reflecting how meetings have changed over the past 100 years. This was enjoyed by everyone.

Shirley McCall, our guest speaker, and her husband, Bob, ministered in this area for a number of years. They now reside in Chatham. Shirley did a wonderful job of portraying how the Women's Missionary Society has progressed during the past 100 years. She spoke of the WMS as being a vibrant organization in the church. We should not just look to the past, but look to new endeavours in this changing world. God has not changed; perhaps we can tell the same "old story" in a new way by encouraging the whole church to be involved in mission. God will be there for us in the future.

**London** Presbyterial held their annual May Retreat on May 1 at Backus-Page Museum near Dutton ON with the theme, Celebrating 100 Years. Valerie Shaw, president, welcomed us and led us in prayer, before introducing the Rev. Bob Shaw, who played his accordion and led us in singing a collection of hymns that were written over 100 years ago.

Catherine McMillan then spoke, giving her recollections of the work of mission bands, explorers, young women's groups, and the WMS within this area. We then all worked on an acrostic poem to help us continue our focus on our history.

After enjoying our brown bag lunch, and touring the 1850s museum, Mildred Greig gave a history of the Komoka WMS and Elaine

Brown presented the history of the Wallacetown Evening Auxilliary. After worship, announcements, and prayer, we returned to our homes having celebrated the dedicated work of many WMS members.

-Elaine Brown

On April 10, a lovely Spring-like day, 12 women's groups gathered at Amos Presbyterian Church in Dromore ON, to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of **Bruce Grey** Presbyterial with our theme, Our Roots Grow Deep, Celebrating 100 Years.

After registration, refreshments, a hymn sing, and welcome by president Pat Edwards, local president Donna Milne, and Amos Church minister, the Rev. Jan MacInnes, we enjoyed worship led by the Wiarton WMS based on Psalm 1. A person who delights in the word of God and meditates on it day and night and is like streams of water, where the leaves of the tress don't wilt and she will prosper in all she does.

Business, such as the roll call and minutes, was dealt with. Then, Esther McGibbon shared excerpts from some of the books for sale at the book table. A skit was presented by five women, showing us how meetings were held in the early 1920s. The script was based on excerpts from actual meetings. All wore hats and dress from that period. They addressed each other as Mrs. John Morros, and Mrs. James Lamb. No first names were used. The bank balance was $5. During the meeting, the hostess's dog ate the fruit from the president's hat.

After a delicious lunch, including the anniversary cake, and a hymn sing, Linda Doll introduced our missionary speaker, Debbie Burns.

Knox Burlington: Mission Awareness Sunday

She told us about her experience in Malawi in 2003 and from 2011 to 2013. She thanked the women for their prayers and cards. When they returned to Malawi in 2011, they saw improvements in health care, thanks to PWS&D support. For 50 years, there has been a strong relationship between the Blantyre Synod of the PCCA and the PCC. In 2012, six young people from Malawi came to Canada for Canada Youth 2012. While in Malawi, the Burns also hosted a group of 11 people from Manitoba and Ontario, who came on a short-term mission trip.

Rev. Jan MacInnis officiated a communion service, with the Dromore WMS assisting. To close, we were entertained by the organist and two of the choir members from Amos Presbyterian Church. We left Dromore thankful for the inspiration of the day and of renewed friendships.

**Brockville** Presbyterial met at First Presbyterian, Brockville ON, on March 27 for their Spring Rally.

President Janet Jones welcomed members and visitors and constituted the meeting with prayer, and Catherine Blatch read Isaiah 35:1–10.

Reverend Marianne Emig Munro, our speaker, told about her experience as one of three students from Knox College who attended the Global Institute of Theology in Indonesia in June 2012. Christianity arrived in Indonesia in the 7th Century. During their time in Indonesia, they attended church services that were full of young people. Local crafts, costumes, and the arts are incorporated into their worship.

## Local

Calgary's **Grace** Church WMS presented their annual Mission Sunday program for the Sunday school. The focus was the Calgary Urban Project Society (CUPS) One World Child Development Centre for 3–6 year-olds from low-income families.

Lesley Lee led discussions on "What does poverty mean to you?" and a description of the programs

books were displayed that will be donated on behalf of the Sunday school. After Margot Gruener led several hymns, the enthusiastic group of 25 children made personalized cards to send to the Centre. Everything from spaceships, butterflies, worms, flowers, and "glitz" adorned the creations.

at the Centre. The CUPS pamphlet, Teaching Families to Fish, emphasized the importance of education in helping children rise above poverty. Three

The students were rewarded with nutritious snacks following the food guidelines at the One World Centre.

**Knox Presbyterian Church, Acton ON, celebrated 60 years of their WMS and Mission Awareness in 2014 with a Mission Service with Dr. Wilma Welsh as the guest speaker.**

**Knox, Burgoyne ON WMS celebrated 113 years and 100 year of their WMS on Mission Awareness Sunday with guest speaker Mary Jane Bisset.**

# Circulation

As you can read in the "WMS … Did You Know" article this month, Alana Martin will be leaving the WMS to further her education. We wish her all the best.

Watch your mailbox for your *Glad Tidings* mailing this summer. It will have all the information you require to renew your subscriptions for the 2015 year. We are also thankful that Katherine Allen will come into the office for a few days this Fall to assist us with imputing the subscriptions.

For circulation issues throughout the year, when possible send an email to Gladtidings@presbyterian.ca. This ensures that we have the correct spelling of any names. However, if you prefer, you can call the office at 416-441-1111, or 1-800-619-7301.

All of your regular submissions for In the Society and Remembering can also be sent to the above email address. Preference for In the Society submissions are given to synodical or presbyterial gatherings. However, if something noteworthy has happened in your local group, you can also submit that and we will print it if space allows. Note, that due to the production schedule, it often takes a few months for any submission to appear in the magazine.

## In Memoriam

Eileen Elizabeth (Johnston) Parish passed away on March 23, 2014, peacefully, after a long journey with Alzheimer's. She was in her 94th year.

Eileen was born in Toronto, and met her husband through church young peoples. They were married in 1941 and lived most of their life in Toronto before relocating to Winnipeg in 1991 to be closer to their daughters and grandchildren.

# Remembering

Wilma Butter
Alberton WMS, Alberton ON

Margaret Donnelly
St. Andrew's WMS, Barrie ON

Kathleen Hodgson
Jean Nettleton
Grace Presbyterian,
Calgary AB

Claire Gardiner
Dr. Margaret Strang Auxiliary,
First Presbyterian Church,
Chatham ON

Anna Mary Arkinstall
Kenyon Presbyterian,
Dunvegan ON

Ruth Forde
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June Dickin
Jean Wales
Margaret Ramsay WMS,
Knox, Leamington ON

Myra Harvey
Hilda Neable
Knox Willing Workers WMS,
Knox, Listowel ON

Nancy Keith
New St. James WMS,
London ON

Jean Jervis
Knox Presbyterian,
Mitchell ON

Isobel Dey
Mary Greatrix
St. Andrew's,
Picton ON

Esther McInnis
Margaret Sevenpifer
Paterson Memorial Church,
Sarnia ON

Ida Blackwell
St. Andrew's Presbyterian
Women, St. Andrew's,
Scarborough ON

Elizabeth (Betty) Mitchell
McLennan Auxilliary WMS,
Tiverton ON

Eileen(Johnston)
St. James WMS,
Winnipeg MB

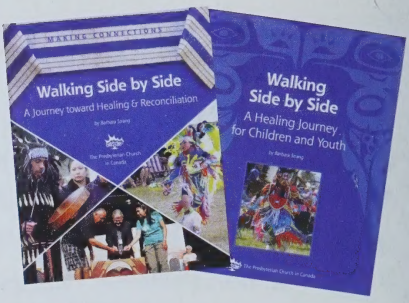
She was dedicated to her family, always putting their needs before her own. She especially loved her grandchildren and was proud of all their accomplishments.

Her strong faith led her to be very involved in the Presbyterian church where she was a long term member, ending with St. James Presbyterian in Winnipeg. She played the piano and organ, when needed, sang in choirs and also conducted junior choirs. She was active in CGIT as a leader, and a member of the Torch Committee. This led to chairing the Board of World Mission Committee as part of the Women's Missionary Society, which allowed her to visit mission partners in Japan, Taiwan, and Malawi. She served as president of the national WMS from 1981–1984.

A memorial service was held for Eileen on April 4 at West Park Manor with the Rev. Peter Bush officiating.

# Making Connections

## Walking Side by Side: A Journey toward Healing and Reconciliation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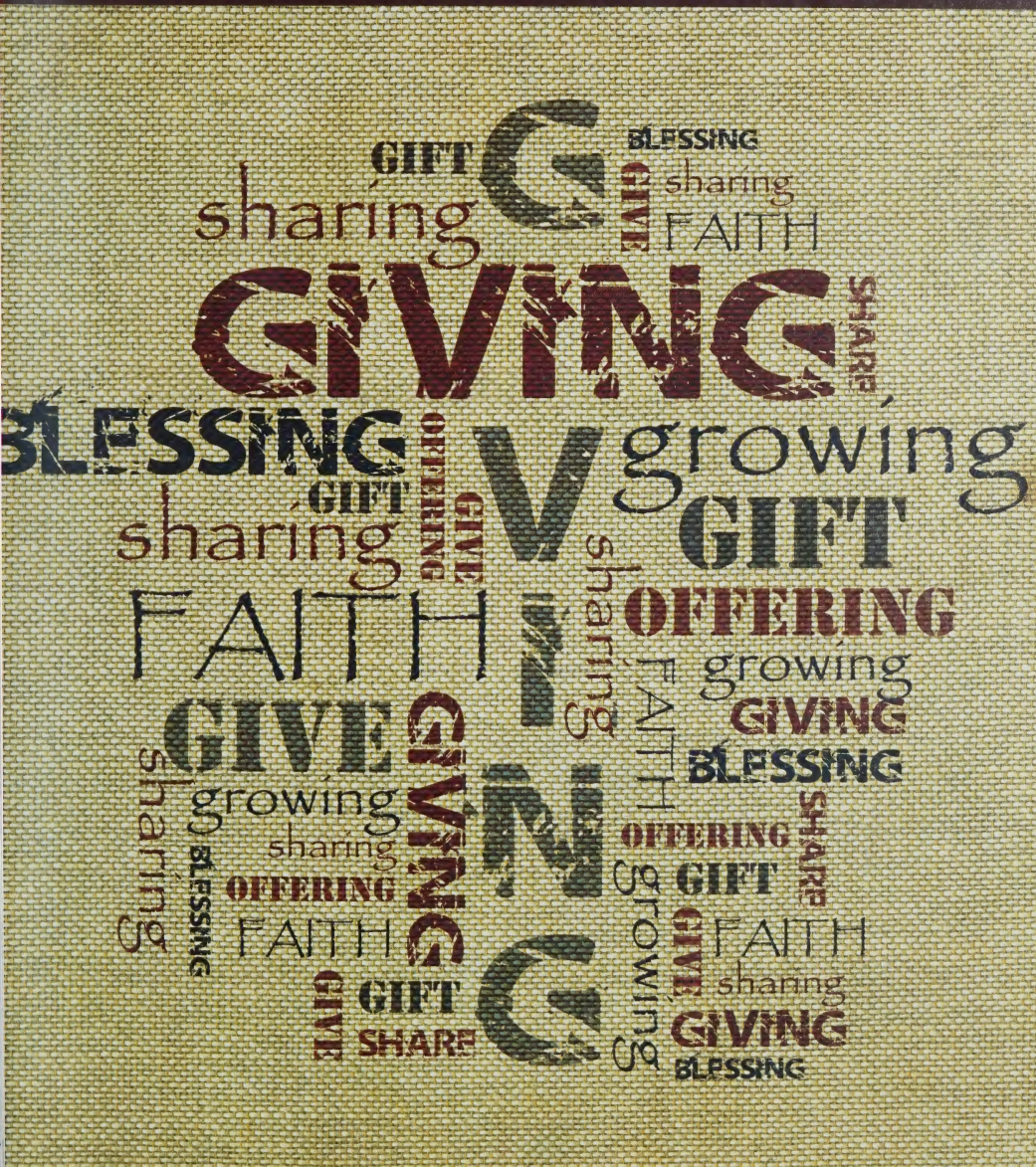
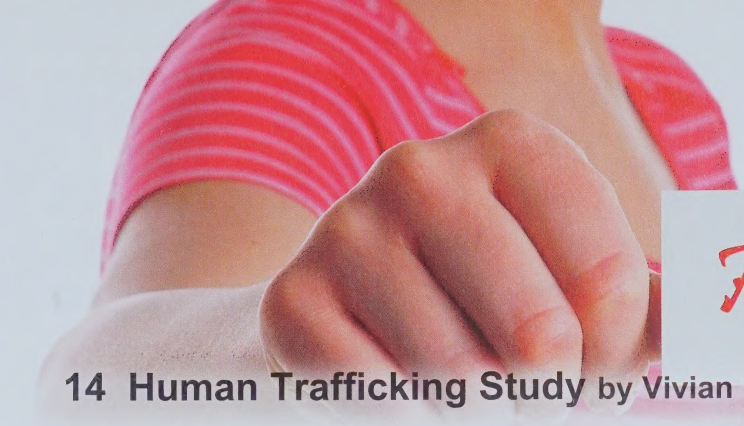
September/October 2014





Help !

14 Human Trafficking Study by Vivian Bertrand

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Glad Tidings

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Canada


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# We Give Thee But Thine Own

by John Peter Smit

From a very early age, we have been taught that in polite company, we should never talk about sex, politics, or religion. When it comes to religion, which is to say the church, it seems that there is one more thing we need to add to this list—money. In spite of the reality that money is mentioned more than 800 times in the Bible, that 11 of the 39 parables talk about money, and one of every seven verses in the gospel of Luke mentions money, there is still a stunning silence in the church about this huge part of all of our lives.

Ironically, even when we talk about stewardship, we are uncomfortable talking about money. As a child I remember hearing not about financial commitment, but about the 3T's—time, talent, and treasure. Guess on which one we spent the least amount of time talking about? Growing up, while we did have financial commitment campaigns, even then (every home visitations for those who remember) the church seemed profoundly uncomfortable speaking about money. Ministers barely preached on it and elders barely referred to it, even during the visitation. In fact money is spoken of so rarely that you would think we had more of it than we knew what to do with, yet the exact opposite was true and for the most part is still true. We don't have the money we need for ministry and yet are almost entirely unwilling or unable to talk about it.

So, let's talk about money. According to the *Globe and Mail* (Joe Friesen, Dec 19, 2013), the average Canadian gives less than 1% of their income to charity (0.8%). Of this, about 40% of charitable giving, or about $4 billion, goes to religious

institutions. (Hospitals are a distant second at $1.6 billion.) According to research by the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, their average church member gives about $850 dollars per year to their church. The article in the *Globe and Mail* confirms this by recognizing that only the top 10% of Canadian donors give more than $1000 per year, and that the median donation in the country (that is the middle—half above and half below) is only $ 123.00.[1] All of this is a rather roundabout way of saying that while we sometimes still hear, "give till it hurts," in reality, most of the time, we don't.

My quick response is that we don't because we haven't been taught and churches haven't been faithful. Christians haven't been taught to give. "Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received." (1 Peter 4:8–10)

Over and over again, scripture uses the image of steward to describe God's children. This is the origin of stewardship. The steward was the one who cared for the owner's affairs while the owner was away. The steward could make decisions in the master's name and could even enter into contracts, but the steward never owned the property: he/she

# "So, let's talk about money"

only managed it in a way that would benefit the master. In the same way, we understand that all that we have, and are, is a gift from God to be used for God's purposes. We belong to God and we are to make our decisions and live our lives in a manner which benefits the master. This is stewardship. This is also discipleship. Sadly, this is not taught much anymore. Likewise, we are not taught to pray (communicate with God), read the bible (learn God's will), or share our faith (tell others of God's love.) Instead, we have internalized our faith and come to believe that God is there to take care of us (comfort, heal, encourage) rather than we to serve God. In this inwardly focussed environment, we forget that all our decisions are a witness—financial and otherwise. Incidentally, more and more churches are realizing that giving is only a part of a much larger financial witness. They are realizing that personal debt, consumerism, and materialism are crippling our world and our people and that unless these are mastered, generous stewardship can never happen.

Churches haven't been faithful. This is the other side of the coin. As much as Christians have not been taught or encouraged to give, churches have not always been faithful in their stewardship of the gifts they have received. I am not talking about dishonesty, but an inward looking stance which uses financial resources for such things as expensive upkeep of crumbling buildings and ministries designed to serve those inside the church rather than those beyond its walls. A 2003 study points out that of every dollar raised, the average protestant church gives only two cents to overseas missions.[ii]

So, why should we give? Having talked about trends in stewardship, let me talk for a moment about my own giving. Ever since we have been married, my wife Tori and I have adhered to three simple principles:

We give first fruits.

We give proportionally.

We give generously.

First, scripture talks about giving our first fruits to God (Deuteronomy 26.) While this is really an agricultural concept, in reality the first cheque we write when we do our bills goes to the church. This is symbolic for us, but also points out our experience that if we give first there is always enough. If we wait till last, there never is.

Second, our offering is always a percentage of income. Yes, the bible speaks of a tithe, in reality some can tithe, some can't, and some can give much more. The actual percentage doesn't matter as much as the

proportion. Then, whether we are rich or poor, the proportion is the same. Equal sacrifice, but different amounts.

Finally, we give generously. There are many verses in the bible about giving. This is my most important: "the point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully." (2 Corinthians 9:6) I have tried to live my life around this verse, not just with money but with everything. I have learned over and over again that you cannot sow seeds of bitterness and reap a harvest of joy. You cannot sow seeds of meanness and harvest kindness. You cannot sow cheapness and harvest generosity. Part of this is simply the 'Golden Rule,' but there is more to it than that. We strive to be generous because even though it is what God wants us to be, it is also what we want to be. We want to be generous and joyful and hopeful and thankful and thoughtful people.

Sometimes it is easier to sing about stewardship than it is to talk about it. In my own life, I can't ever think about stewardship without remembering what as a child we sang when the offering came up:

We give thee but thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be,
For all we have is thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from thee

[i] http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/ national/what-canadians-give-how-charity-depends-on-where-you-live/article16065426/

[ii] http://www.worldmag.com/2005/10/who_gives_two_cents_for_missions

*John Peter Smit is Congregational Development Consultant for the Synod of Central, Northeastern Ontario and Bermuda.*

# From Living Faith:

We are not owners, but stewards of God's good earth. Concerned with the well-being of all of life we welcome the truths and insights of all human skill and science about the world and the universe. Our stewardship calls us to explore ways of love and justice in respecting God's creation and in seeking its responsible use for the common good.

Living Faith, 2.4.1; 2.4.2

# One by One, Two by Two, and Four by Four

by Herb Gale

It is 6:00 a.m. on July 17 and I am awakened with a start from a vivid dream. In the dream I have enrolled in a university course simply entitled, Giving, and I am late for the first class. It is a large campus, and I don't know who the professor of the course is or where the class is being taught. I board a bus that travels around a large circle at the centre of the campus, but I don't know where to get off the bus. Finally, the bus stops and everyone remaining on the bus disembarks. I am left on the sidewalk, unsure of which of the many buildings is holding the class and fearful that I will never find the class in time for the lecture. It is then I wake up.

Psychologists have a term for such dreams—anxiety dreams. The root of my anxiety was obvious. I had promised Colleen Wood that I would write an article for *Glad Tidings* on Planned Giving. The article was due that day, and I hadn't finished it yet (if the truth be known, I hadn't even started it yet!). As I went to bed the night before, I wondered if I would have anything to say or where to start; thus, my anxiety.

As I lay in bed, thinking about the dream and my impending article, I remembered a song we used to sing in Vacation Bible School at Westminster St. Paul's Church in Guelph.

*Love grows one by one, two by two, and four by four.*
*Love grows 'round like a circle and comes back knocking at your front door.*

*Note by note we make this song, voice by voice we sing it.*
*Choir by choir we fill up the world with the music that we bring it.*

*So let me take your hand my friend, we'll each take a hand of another.*
*Hand in hand we'll reach 'round the world to our sisters and our brothers.*

We used simple gestures to illustrate the chorus as we sang, holding up one finger, then two, then four, then circling our hands in the air and knocking on an imaginary door (You can see a beautiful rendition of the song with actions and appropriate photos on You Tube at http://youtu.be/qlpBQabQDxM).

# Love grows one by one, two by two, and four by four. Love grows 'round like a circle and comes back knocking at your front door.

I love that simple little song by Carol Johnson, not just because of its catchy tune and simple actions, but mainly because it is so true. Love does grow one by one and two by two and four by four. And as we add our voices to the song—as we each do our own little bit to put our love into action by giving our love away—the song grows in the ever expanding circle of God's grace and "comes back knocking at our front door."

With that song providing a kind of background music for my soul, I continued to ponder the dream as I lay in bed. And the image that burst forth in my mind's eye was from the many WMS circle meetings I attended in the congregations I served as a minister. Part of the ritual of each circle meeting was the passing of an offering plate or box (sometimes called a Mite Box after the King James Version's translation of Jesus' story of the widow's offering in the gospels) around the circle of those gathered for each person to put in their "least coin." It is incredible the amount of money raised for Christ's mission through that simple ritual in circle meetings across Canada and around the world. Love does indeed grow one by one, two by two, and four by four!

Or does it? These are anxious times for the PCC and the WMS. At this critical point in our history, we aren't growing, we are declining … rapidly. One by one and two by two, congregations and WMS groups are closing as lifelong members are dying or are simply becoming too feeble to get to meetings, and the aging members are not being replaced by younger members. The coffers are running low, forcing the church and WMS to make tough decisions: cutting off funding for regional staffing, closing The Book Room, etc. In such times the question becomes: Can we continue to sing Carol Johnson's song with integrity and joy, and will there be new voices in the future to join in the chorus? Or will Carol Johnson's song turn into a song of lament?

With those questions in mind, I would like to don my Planned Giving hat, for I am convinced that our

planned gifts offer a way forward and a genuine ray of hope—a ray of hope that can shine far down the future and can help future generations to participate in Carol Johnson's chorus in new and exciting ways. We are all familiar with the many ways that we can provide financial support for the church through our current income. This is the pocket from which we give to the church through our weekly offering or when the mite box is passed around at WMS meetings. We are less familiar with the many ways we can support the church from our accumulated assets. These gifts are called "planned gifts," and they provide an additional source of income to grow the church and its ministry far into the future—"enduring gifts," Kennon Callahan calls them because they go on giving for generations to come.

Let take Helen Watson as an example. She was an active member of the Atlantic Mission Society in Nova Scotia and a long time supporter of mission work both locally and around the world. She was also a retired nurse and left a bequest of $300,000 for St. David's Church in Halifax with the instructions that her gift be used to support mission work in Nova Scotia. St. David's established an endowment fund in Helen's name, whereby Helen's gift was permanently invested and only the annual income is available for the purposes of the fund. A decade after she passed away the fund had disbursed more than $110,000 for such ministries as the Out of the Cold program in Halifax and a Mission Animator position for Camp Geddie, and there is still more than $300,000 remaining in the fund—and growing!

On May 26, Joanne Instance, who was national president of the WMS from 2001–2004, passed away in Winnipeg surrounded by her family. She died just days after attending the 100th Anniversary Celebration for the WMS and the Presbyterian Women's Gathering with her daughter Carole. With Joanne's passing, one more vital voice in the WMS has been lost, but her legacy lives on. Several years ago she acquired a gift annuity through the PCC, naming *Presbyterians Sharing*, PWS&D, and the WMS as beneficiaries. Through her foresight and generosity, Joanne will continue to give for generations to come. And so Joanne, even in and through death, is still part of the chorus.

In many ways I think we have misinterpreted Jesus' story of the widow's mite. Yes, she put only two small copper coins into the temple treasury. But the gift itself wasn't small; it was extravagantly large and generous—all she had to live on.

(Luke 21:4) Jesus praised her, not because she threw a couple of pennies in the offering plate, but because she gave with such wholehearted generosity, trusting God to provide for her even in her poverty. If we are to truly follow her example, it does not mean rummaging through our purses to find the least coin we have to offer. It means searching our hearts and using our imaginations to discover new ways to use the accumulated wealth God has entrusted to us for God's purposes:

- A gift of stock could be used to fund expanded ministry opportunities for young people through the Creative Ministry with Children and Youth Mission Priority Fund.
- The members of a WMS group could each acquire a gift annuity to fund mission outreach for generations to come while providing lifelong tax-free income for each member.
- One person, or a group of people, could endow a permanent mission staff position through the Living Links Missionary Endowment Fund.

The possibilities are truly endless, as endless as God's abundant grace. We don't have to take a university course on giving before we can start being generous. We can each take our place on God's circle of grace and add our voices to God's mighty chorus. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the Mite Box became a Might Box that empowered us to dream about what God can do through God's might and grace as we learn to share our gifts and pool our resources—both our current income and our accumulated assets—to invest in the future God is even now creating! After all, if God can take five loaves and two fish and multiply them to feed a multitude with twelve baskets of leftovers, just imagine what God might do with 100 shares of Bell Canada stock, a gift annuity, or a charitable bequest through your will.

Sometimes all it takes is adding a codicil to your will, stating that you would like the residue remaining in your estate to go to The Presbyterian Church in Canada, the WMS, or your local congregation. In fact, sometimes all it takes is letting your family know that that you would like your obituary to read, "*In lieu of flowers, memorial donations can be made to (the ministry of your choice in The Presbyterian Church in Canada).*" That's what the six children of Lorna van Mossel did to honour their mother and father after their mother passed away this past June. They established The van Mossel Refugee Support Fund through PWS&D and invited those who wanted to make a memorial gift in honour of their parents to contribute to the fund by adding the "In lieu of flowers…" sentence to Lorna's obituary. Now thousands of dollars are flowing into the fund to support refugee work in Canada and around the world.

# Generous Children

by Colleen Wood

My four-year-old daughter and I were talking after a trip to the library where we returned with 20 books for her and her brother. I said we were so lucky to be able to go to the library and pick out books and blessed to already have so many books on our shelves. We talked about a book we had read at one point about a travelling library that brought books to rural villages in the developing world. We talked about children who didn't own any books or only got to read at their schools. Emily went to her room and a few minutes later returned with two books to give away. She wanted another child to have books too.

We sometimes think of children as selfish—always wanting the toy their sibling or friend has, or choosing the largest portion of cake, but I think there is another side to children. I have seen the generosity of children countless times. My children, who are both obsessed over stuffed animals, are willing to part with some for our church's annual carnival. Both children are always willing to donate to the Christmas toy drive or to other charities. Their school recently had a hot dog lunch to raise funds for fire victims in our city, and over $1000 was raised. Children, when given an opportunity, are generous.

With this natural generous spirit, we should take every opportunity we have to allow children to become generous givers. For me, the first part of stewardship is acknowledging our blessings and giving thanks. This can be done in a variety of ways. Certainly, we try to stop before we eat to give thanks every night for our

dinner. Also, at the end of the day, in our bedtime prayers, we often give a chance for our children to say what they are thankful for. Just a few minutes of thanksgiving at the end of a day is all that is needed. Within the church community, perhaps a large sheet of paper can be posted for children to draw or write about things they are thankful for when they arrive every week, or when they are waiting for parents to pick them. Even better, put this where adults and children can contribute to it within your church!

The second part of stewardship is giving. Once children start having access to money, they should start learning about being generous with it. When Ian was about to turn four, we figured it was time to start giving him some experience with money. Right from the start we wanted to give him an understanding of the different ways one can use money. Ian already owned three different piggy banks that he had been given, two as baptismal gifts. We decided one would be for saving, one for sharing, and one for spending. (You can actually buy a piggy bank that is divided into three (or sometimes four) sections, but even recycling some old jars or boxes can do the job).

Each week, we gave him six quarters, and one quarter would go in to each of his three piggy banks. He got to decide where the last three quarters went. In the beginning, every piggy bank got two, but fairly soon he realized the power that was in his spending bank. (To his credit, he did save enough in that spending bank to buy himself a game he wanted which cost almost $20.) For us, his sharing bank was most important. In the beginning, all his money from this bank went into his church offering envelope. But, as many of you can perhaps relate to, we would often forget to bring this offering envelope. In the end, this was great because then as appeals came across his life, which even happens in the life of a child, Ian had money to contribute from what was left in his sharing bank. His school has a sponsored child so he can choose to support that. When there is a food drive at the school, our church, or the mall, he can take some money

*"We talk to our children about these charities and let our children know more than just the name of the organization. We visit their website and talk about how these charities help people in the world."*

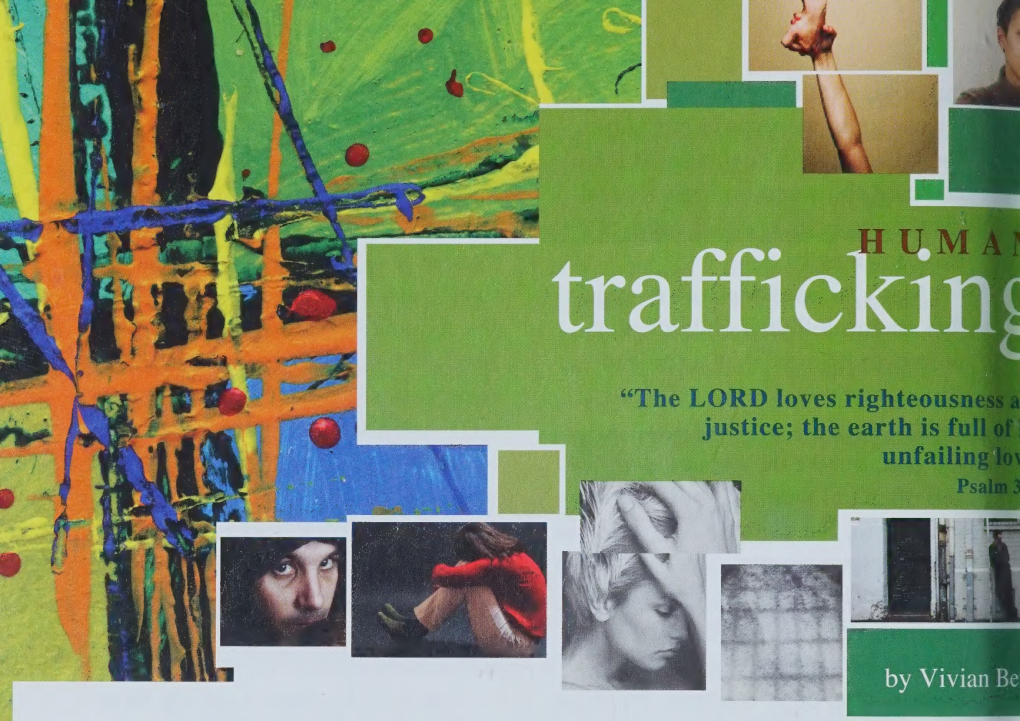
out of his sharing bank, and together we can go to the store to buy some food. He is really beginning to learn and care about certain charities and his sharing bank lets him contribute to them financially.

Many stewardship books suggest that parents tell their children about their own giving habits, even naming the amount they give. At this point, we don't tell our children how much we give, but we do talk about giving, and often tell them about the causes we give to. For us, we have chosen to give larger amounts to fewer charities. We have chosen our church, one international charity, and one local mission. It doesn't mean we never contribute to other charities, but these are our priorities. We talk to our children about these charities and let our children know more than just the name of the organization. We visit their website and talk about how these charities help people in the world.

We also talk about stewardship of our time, though not using those words. Our children see us spending time at the church, teaching Sunday school, and attending meetings. They certainly know we volunteer at the church. Our city also has an event called 'Love Brampton,' where many of the churches get together to host a variety of events across the city, including a clothing exchange, bike repairs, a 'spa,' a tea party, and free dental services. For the last two years, Ian, our eight-year-old, has helped along with his Dad at the free carnival leading games. Although, much of his time was spent playing and having fun, he also did help where he could, and he knew why this carnival happened. This year, even our four-year-old wanted to help at our church's carnival. (In the end, she let daddy volunteer on his own, but she is beginning to think about how she can be involved.)

Finally, we talk about stewardship of God's earth. Just this past weekend, at the end of our church carnival, we picked up plastic water bottles to recycle them, to help keep God's earth clean. We talk about caring for God's earth when we turn off our lights, recycle, or compost.

Some of this doesn't seem to have much impact. My kids still fight over the biggest piece of cake. They still will fight over a few pieces of their favourite Lego, even though the floor is covered with it. They still leave the lights on and the tap dripping. Yet, I still think this is important. According to several studies, most children learn their attitudes about giving between the ages of six and ten. And, we are starting to see its effect. As I was reading through Ian's journal that he kept at school this past year, I read, "My mom went to India and I am sad. But, I know she and the women are there to help children, who need a place to sleep, so it's okay." He was willing to be generous with his mom, even though it was hard, because she was helping others. May we all be this generous!



# HUMAN trafficking

**"The LORD loves righteousness a justice; the earth is full of unfailing lo**

**Psalm 3**

by Vivian Be

*This is the second of four mission studies on the topic of social justice. The following sessions are planned:*

**Refugees**
in January/February 2015 edition

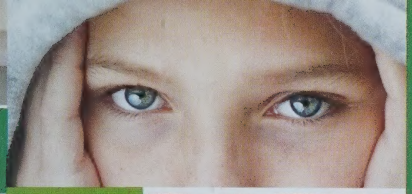
**The Plight of the Roma People**
in May/June 2015 edition

**What is Social Justic?**
was in July/August 2014 edition

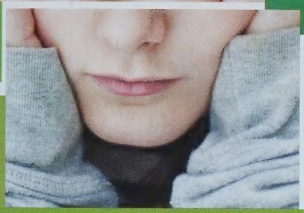
## Opening Prayer

In our opening prayer, we will pray that we might be able to face this issue and, despite its horror, emerge with hope and ideas about what we can do. We can only confront this kind of evil if we start with acknowledging our hope in God, for these atrocities are too terrible, these acts too horrific, to handle on our own. It is through God, and through working together, that we can help end human trafficking. As you read this, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13.

Dear Lord,
Give us courage to confront this issue. Give us eyes to see—that we might acknowledge the reality of evil in our midst. Give us ears to hear—that we might recognize the humanity of the persons involved in these issues as we read their stories. Give us tears to weep—that we might have compassion for your people. And give us the strength to act with hope and to be your light in this world. Amen.



forced labour



commercial sex trade

## Introduction

*What is Human Trafficking?*

Human trafficking is the illegal trade in human beings for the purpose of providing forced labour or sexual exploitation.[i] More specifically, human trafficking is an organized criminal activity in which human beings are sold, traded, or abducted by means of the use of force, threat, or some form of coercion or deception for the purpose of forced labour or forced prostitution. There are several types of human trafficking, including forced labour, child labour, involuntary domestic servitude, bonded or debt labour, sex trafficking, and child soldiers.[ii]

Human trafficking is distinct from human smuggling. A person requests to be smuggled across a border and is free upon arrival in their destination country. Human trafficking does not necessarily involve transporting a person, and it can happen within a country: it doesn't always involve border crossings, but it always involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of forced labour or forced prostitution.[iii]

Human trafficking is a difficult and complex topic. It can leave us feeling depressed or overwhelmed and powerless to affect change. But there is hope. There are many organizations around the world working on this issue, and governments are beginning to enact new laws and create new offices to address the problem of human trafficking. *The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children* entered into force in 2003 and has been ratified by 159 states. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which is responsible for implementing the Protocol, assists states with drafting laws and creating anti-trafficking strategies.[iv]

# Help!

*Where is this happening?*

Human trafficking affects every country of the world. People are trafficked into, out of, and through Canada. Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto are hubs for organized crime groups trafficking in persons, and Vancouver has been singled out by the U.S. State Department as a port of major concern for human trafficking.[v] The Government of British Columbia was the first province in Canada to set up a special office for dealing with human trafficking when it established the Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (OCTIP) in 2007.[vi]

In Canada, First Nations women are particularly vulnerable. One known case involved an Ojibwe girl, Bridget, in Northern Ontario. First raped by a family friend at a young age, her subsequent behaviour problems resulted in her being sent to a group home where she was lured into prostitution and then sold to shipmen docking in the port city of Thunder Bay, Ontario. She was 12 years old.[vii]

The Canadian Red Cross tells the story of a woman from Thailand, who was offered the opportunity to live in a big city in Canada and make lots of money. Upon her arrival in Canada, a group of men met her at the airport, took her passport ("for safe keeping"), and then drove her to a house with many other women where she was told the price for her freedom was $30,000. For months she lived in the locked house, was given little food, and was escorted daily, by force, to a brothel were she had to "service" men. Eventually the house was raided by government officials. Although the woman was freed, she was left with no official identity and was unsure of her future.[viii]

**EQUALITY NOW website**

**"Worldwide, there are an estimated 2 million children in the commercial sex trade."[xvii]**

Human trafficking has escalated in the past two decades. It is not just an issue in developing countries, nor is a threat only to our First Nations women and children. In fact, a journalist in North Carolina almost became a victim a few months ago when she was offered a reporting job for the Sochi Olympics. The talent agent who contacted her said he was hiring U.S. reporters for the Olympics. After a four-month interview process the woman discovered that the 'talent acquisition agency' was bogus. The FBI became involved and discovered the agency was most likely a front for a sex trafficking ring.[ix] It took an American journalist four months to determine that the job offer was not legitimate.

In our last study, we looked at social justice, which involves changing systems to create a society that recognizes the equality of all persons. Human trafficking is based on a belief in the inequality of humans, especially between the rich and poor and between men and women. It is exacerbated by problems, such as discrimination, the feminization of poverty, and the objectification of women. According to the United Nations, 75% of recorded human trafficking victims are female.[x]
Human trafficking is a social justice issue, and addressing it involves changing societal systems and belief structures.

*Why is this happening and why is it escalating?*

According to International Justice Mission Canada, after drug dealing, human trafficking is "tied with the illegal arms industry as the second largest criminal industry in the world today, and it is the fastest growing."[xi] As we

**Proverbs 31:8–9**

***Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.***

discussed in the last study, the gap between the rich and the poor has been widening worldwide. The gap is widening not just between countries, but within countries, and between men and women in developing countries. Many factors are contributing to the growth in human trafficking including long-term unemployment; gender-based inequality; the Internet; a globalized, free-market economy; an increase in the demand for cheap labour, goods and services; and increased international mobility.[xii] It is also very profitable, yet much more difficult to prosecute compared to other illegal crimes.

## What can we do?

**"Human trafficking is tied with the illegal arms industry as the second largest criminal industry in the world today.**

*1. Learn*

The first thing we can do is educate ourselves. There are several websites listed below in the Going Deeper section.

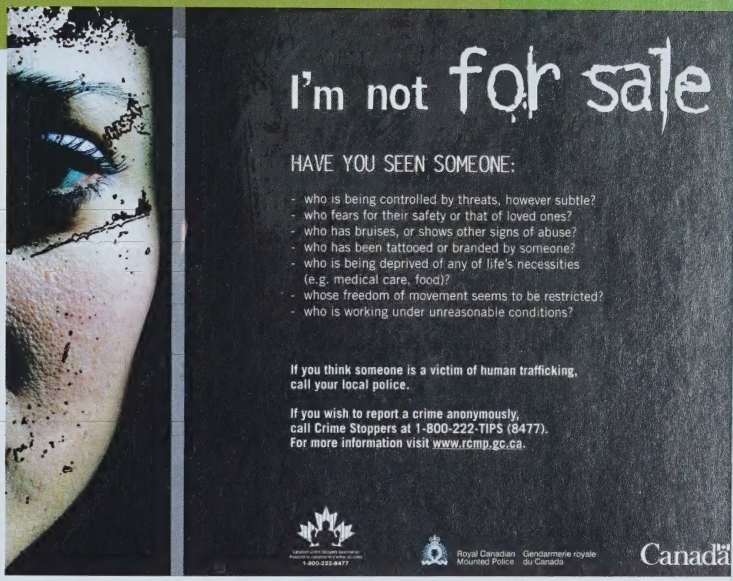
*2. Reduce Consumption*

We can also ask questions about the products we buy and work at reducing our consumption of the products most likely to be produced using child labour or to involve human rights violations (e.g., gold, cotton, sugar, tobacco, coffee, and inexpensive clothing made in sweat shops).[xiii]

*3. Increase Awareness*

We can help our families, friends, and churches learn about this issue by holding a workshop at our church or asking a speaker who works on these issues to speak to our congregation or WMS. Some organizations also have videos or films available to use. The World Council of Churches kit includes workshop materials for churches and a list of possible speakers. It is available at http://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CCC_HumanTraffickingInCanada_English2014_FINAL.pdf. See the Going Deeper section below for more information.

**Today, it is estimated that there are 30 million people in forced labour as a result of human trafficking.[xv] This number has grown from an estimated 2.5 million people in 2007.[xvi]**


I'm not for sale
HAVE YOU SEEN SOMEONE:
- who is being controlled by threats, however subtle?
- who fears for their safety or that of loved ones?
- who has bruises, or shows other signs of abuse?
- who has been tattooed or branded by someone?
- who is being deprived of any of life's necessities (e.g. medical care, food)?
- whose freedom of movement seems to be restricted?
- who is working under unreasonable conditions?
If you think someone is a victim of human trafficking, call your local police.
If you wish to report a crime anonymously, call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).
For more information visit www.rcmp.gc.ca.
1-800-222-8477
Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Gendarmerie royale du Canada
Canada

*4. Volunteer*

We can volunteer with organizations that work on these issues or organizations that help those at risk of trafficking.

*5. Pray*

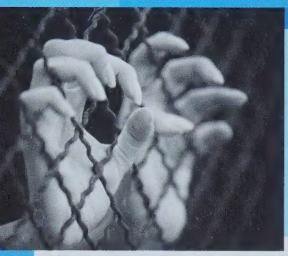
Pray for those at risk of being trafficked, for freedom for victims, for perpetrators, for those working to end trafficking, and for healing for all involved. Organize a prayer service about human trafficking. (The Salvation Army website has information for a Weekend of Prayer for Human Trafficking. See http://salvationist.ca/action-support/humantrafficking/weekend-of-prayer/)

*6. Support local and national laws that protect against trafficking*

Address your concerns to your elected officials regarding human trafficking and its root causes. In Canada, new prostitution laws could help to reduce trafficking. See this letter to Peter Mackay, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, from Patricia Burton-Williams, Executive Director of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, http://www.wicc.org/blog/news/wicc-executive-directors-letter-to-peter-mackay/.

*7. Promote gender equality*

Human trafficking affects women and girls the most. Much of it involves sexual exploitation and is based on the objectification of women. Challenge those who make sexist or racist jokes. Promote gender equality in your own life. Pray for anyone in your life who might watch pornography or pay for sex.



## Biblical Reflection

*God's Nature*

We begin this section by reflecting on who God is.

Read Psalm 33:5 and Psalm 146

- What are some of God's characteristics listed here that stand out to you?

Read Luke 4:14–21

- What did Christ say he was sent to do?

*The Problem*

Read Jeremiah 5:27–28 and Jeremiah 22:13–17

What do you see as some of the root causes of human trafficking?

*Our Response*

Read Matthew 25:42–46 and Proverbs 29:7

- What are we called to do? How do these passages relate to human trafficking?

Read Psalm 34:15–18

- How do you interpret this Psalm when you know that millions of people around the world are suffering from human trafficking? When the righteous cry out, does the Lord hear them and deliver them from all their troubles? Is the Lord close to the broken hearted?

*Healing*

- What do you think about God's love for you? What have you found that best communicates God's love and compassion for you (e.g., a song, a hymn, a scripture passage, a story or a book)?

In the face of evil, I need to remind myself of God's character and his love. I recently heard a praise song that communicates God's love to me in a way that gives me confidence in who I am and what I can do. For me, it is a source of hope. It also helps me as I think about praying for healing for the victims and perpetrators of human trafficking, who desperately need to feel God's love for them.

## Going Deeper

- There are many resources on human trafficking available. Listed below are just a few of the many documents and websites:
- The World Council of Churches produced an excellent learning kit for churches in 2013, which is available online and includes a workshop and numerous resources. *Human Trafficking in Canada: A Leadership and Learning Kit for Churches*. World Council of Churches, 2013. http://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CCC_HumanTraffickingInCanada_English2014_FINAL.pdf
- The Evangelical Covenant Church produced a very useful booklet in 2012 called *Protect: A Strategy to Prevent Human Trafficking in our Communities.*
- http://www.covchurch.org/resources/files/2012/05/Protect-booklet.pdf. This booklet is an excellent resource. It includes articles on various topics, including the importance of educating at-risk children and youth about human trafficking and ideas for programs and ways to engage your community.
- International Justice Mission. http://www.ijm.org/ and International Justice Mission Canada. http://www.ijm.ca/
- Polaris Project. http://www.polarisproject.org/
- The A21 Campaign. http://www.thea21campaign.org
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/

# What our church is doing

Many congregations, WMS groups, and individuals are working to help. For example, Westminster-St. Paul's Presbyterian Church in Guelph ON hosted Mariliana Morales, founder and director of Fundación Rahab, a ministry to prostituted women and children in San Jose Costa Rica in March 2014. Also, The Presbytery of East Toronto supports ARISE ministry, which offers outreach, case management, and pastoral care for individuals involved in the sex-trade.

In addition, The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Presbyterian World Service & Development have a number of programs which support women and children.

human *trafficking*

# Closing Prayer[xiv]

Creator God, each person on this earth was made in your image—full of dignity and deserving of respect, honour, and compassion. We pray for victims of sexual trafficking who have been bought, sold and exploited—that they would be set free and that their dignity and honour would be restored.

*Lord, have mercy.*

Father God, we pray for your daughters and sons, who are vulnerable to sexual trafficking. We pray for women and children. We pray for the poor. We pray for orphans and abandoned children, widows, and abandoned wives. We pray for those who have already been sexually abused. Father God, protect them and prevent them from being trafficked.

*Lord, have mercy.*

Jesus Christ, you are the suffering servant, who has experienced violence, humiliation and rejection. Comfort victims of sexual trafficking, who have gone through the same. May they never feel alone. Pour out your love, giving strength, grace, and wisdom.

*Lord, have mercy.*

Son of man, purify the hearts and minds of traffickers and all those involved in the sex industry. We pray for repentance and change, justice and restoration.

*Lord, show your power.*

All-knowing God, do not allow us to ignore injustice. May our eyes be ever seeing, our ears be ever hearing, and our hearts be ever searching. Give feet to our prayers so that we might stamp out oppression and walk towards truth.

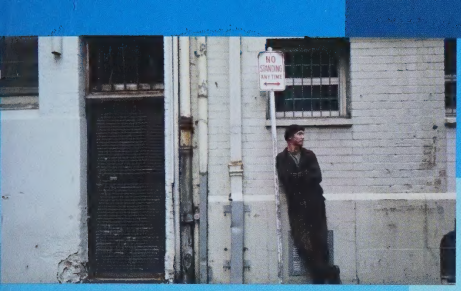
*Lord, show your power.*

Omnipotent God, we ask that you break the chains of injustice and set the captives free! Release the prisoners of sexual trafficking and deliver them from all evil. Redeemer, we pray for restoration, healing, and hope.

*Lord, show your power.*

Lord of lords and King of kings, may your justice and righteousness reign supremely in this world and in our lives. May your kingdom come and your will be done. May human trafficking be abolished, and its victims be set free.

*Lord, show your power.*



[i] A21 Campaign. http://www.thea21campaign.org/content/the-facts/gjekag

[ii] US Department of State, "Major Forms of Trafficking in Persons." http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2009/123126.htm

[iii] *The Polaris Project. http://www.polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/human-trafficking-faqs#Is human trafficking another word for smuggling?*

[iv] Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protocol_to_Prevent,_Suppress_and_Punish_Trafficking_in_Persons,_especially_Women_and_Children#cite_note-1

[v] British Columbia Ministry of Justice, "Human Trafficking in British Columbia." http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/octip/

[vi] *Ibid.*

[vii] Taina Bien-Aime , "O Canada! Will You Free Your Glorious Land of Prostitution?" *Huffington Post*. The Blog. April 30, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/taina-bienaime/canada-sex-trafficking_b_5232806.html

[viii] World Council of Churches, *Human Trafficking in Canada: A Leadership and Learning Kit for Churches*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: World Council of Churches, 2013), p.10. http://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CCC_HumanTraffickingInCanada_English2014_FINAL.pdf

[ix] Luke Garratt, "'If it seems too good to be true, it probably is': Ex-NFL cheerleader almost became a victim of sex trafficking at Sochi through bogus reporting job," *Daily Mail Online*, Feb.25, 2014. http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2567347/If-good-true-probably-Ex-NFL-cheerleader-victim-HUMAN-TRAFFICKING-Sochi-Olympics-bogus-reporting-job.html#ixzz34afmFFz5

[x] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons*, (New York: United Nations: New York, 2012). http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/Trafficking_in_Persons_2012_web.pdf

[xi] International Justice Mission Canada. http://www.ijm.ca/resources/PDFscasework/20100426b_Sex_Trafficking.pdf

[xii] World Council of Churches. Human Trafficking in Canada: A Leadership and Learning Kit for Churches.

[xiii] Native Village. http://www.nativevillage.org/Editorials/13%20Products%20Most%20likely%20made%20by%20child%20labor.htm

[xiv] World Council of Churches, p.23. (attributed to the Salvation Army website)

[xv] Not for Sale Campaign. http://www.notforsalecampaign.org/human-trafficking/

[xvi] United Nations. Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. "Human Trafficking: The Facts."

[xvii] Equality Now. http://www.equalitynow.org/node/1010

[xviii] RCMP. http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ht-tp/index-eng.htm

# Thanksgiving Worship Service

by Colleen Wood

**Preparation:** You will need two different-coloured sheets of paper and have each cut into strips big enough to write a few words on. One coloured sheet will be used for writing 'worries' and the other a few words of 'thanksgiving'. Each participant should be given 2–3 pieces of each colour as they arrive and a pen or pencil.

**Call to Worship:**

ONE: I will not worry ...

ALL: I will not worry about what I wear. Even though I am bombarded with images of the right clothes and the right look. Even though my children or grandchildren might say, 'you are going to wear that'? Even though my hands are getting feeble and sometimes even getting dressed in the morning seems difficult. I know that what I put on the outside does not matter, and I will focus on what is on the inside as I clothe myself in God's love.

ONE: I will not worry ...

ALL: I will not worry about the things I eat. Every day, I hear that I should eat this and avoid that. I indulge on some days and regret it the next. I will appreciate and enjoy the food that I have and thank God for my daily bread. I will be generous and share the food I do have.

ONE: I will not worry …

ALL: I will not worry that my house is too big, too small, too outdated, too cluttered, or too opulent. Wherever I am, I will know that God's presence is with me.

ONE: I will not worry …

ALL: Even through the difficult times, I will rest in God. When I don't know what comes next, I will trust in God. As the world around me seems out of control, I will pray for God's peace in both my life and in the world. I will not worry because God is with me and I can lay my burdens down. Thanks be to God, Amen.

**Hymn** # 663: God, whose giving knows no ending

**Scripture:** Psalm 63, Matthew 6:25–33

**Reflection:**

*The Magic Soup Pot* (Inspired by the folk story, Stone Soup.)

She was saddened. As the children opened their lunches, she knew some would not have enough. The kindergarten teacher knew that some of the children were coming to school with inadequate lunches. The local plant had closed down over two years ago. The money that had come to those who worked there at the closing was long gone. Unemployment insurance had ended. Many of the families were now relying on other forms of social assistance and those cheques barely covered their rent. She knew that some of the families were relying on the local food bank. It helped, but usually the odd array of products the families received there did not make for healthy lunches for growing children. Some of the food needed to be cooked. Some didn't travel well. Some wwere ethnically inappropriate. Almost all of the food was processed because the collection and distribution of fresh food was much more difficult.

And that's when she had an idea. Perhaps none of the families had enough to create a good lunch on their own, but what if they all worked together. What if they worked together to create a healthy lunch for everyone? And that is when she launched her plan. She decided that they would make soup.

The next day, she told the children that they were going to have a party. It was going to be a magic soup party, but they all needed to bring something. First, she asked each of the children to name their favourite foods. Some named pizza, others pasta, and several named fast-food restaurants. One even named broccoli to the shock of the other children!

She then asked them to name the foods that they ate most often at their home. Pasta was certainly named a lot, but so were hotdogs and bread. She reminded them what vegetables were and then the children shouted out, "We eat carrots." "My mom made me try onions last night." "We have baby tomatoes on a plant on our balcony." Another said, "My dad brings home bread most days from the store where he works."

She began to make a list in her head using the children's responses and the knowledge she had from already being with these children for a month of school. Now, how to ask those with so little, to contribute? She decided she would make an individual letter to send home with each child. For those she knew who had a little more, she would ask for a little more. Susan's mom was the administrator at the school, so she asked her if she could bring either half a cup of leftover chicken or cooked ground beef. She knew that Diana's family often sent some cooked beans in her lunch, so from Diana she asked if maybe they could send some cooked beans. From David, she asked for a few tomatoes from his tomato plant. She also knew that Sam's dad worked at the bakery and had access to day-old bread so she asked if he could provide a loaf of that. She walked by Emma's house every night with her dog, so she knew her family had a lovely garden with carrots, so she asked if she could bring some fresh carrots. Another family that frequented the food bank was asked for a can of tomatoes, or other canned vegetables, or a handful of pasta. For each child, she gave a suggestion of two or three different things (and the suggestion that they could choose to bring whatever they had at the time).

When she got to the end of the list, she was concerned. She had two children from families with almost nothing. What would be the one thing that they could bring? So, she asked them for the magical ingredient. She asked each to bring a special rock. They would need to search for a rock that they felt had just the right amount of magic for the magic soup. The rocks were needed to make the soup taste just right.

The night before the big event, she was nervous. She sat on her bed that night and prayed to God. She prayed for each child, each family, hoping that she hadn't asked for too much. When she was done, she put a small bag of potatoes in her school bag, and another bag with a few teaspoons of salt and some bouillon cubes. This would be her contribution and she could also share it with a child who had forgotten to bring their own. She also packed her crockpot, cutting board, and a knife.

The day arrived and the children were so excited! Each brought their gift with much enthusiasm! Together they washed and prepped the items, cutting them in small pieces to have them cooked in time. First, she added some water and had all the children try it. She asked them how it tasted and she recorded their answers. The children said it was cold, boring, watery, and weird.

Then, the children took turns putting their items into the crockpot. She added the salt and the bouillon cubes and then gave the children a spoonful to try again. Again, she asked how the soup tasted now. The responses were similar—cold,

yucky, no flavour, watery. Then, she turned to the children to whom she had asked to bring in the rocks. They beamed as they presented their 'magic' rocks. One was large and grey, the other just a pebble which sparkled of gold and red. Together they washed them and placed both in the crock pot. In the end, she asked a friend to bring in a second pot because there was too much for just one pot.

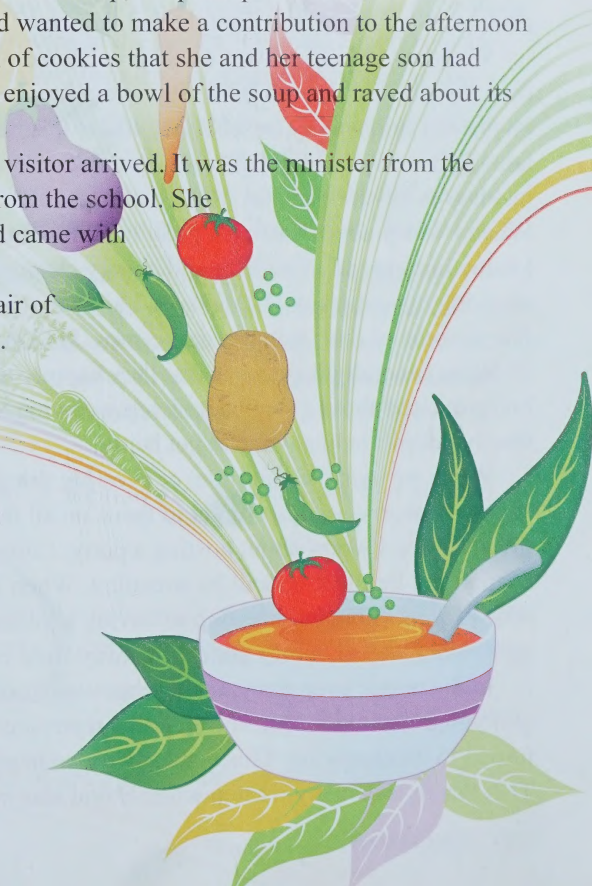
It didn't take long for the smell of homemade soup to start filling the classroom. By 2:00 p.m., it was time for the party to begin. She dished out the soup along with slices of lovely day-old whole wheat bread.

Some gobbled up the soup and the bread quickly on their own. Others dipped the bread into the hot soup as they slowly and skillfully consumed them together. The class declared it the best soup they had ever tasted. Even those who declared they hated some of the ingredients on their own happily ate it up. They all assumed it had to be the magic rocks!

Just as they were finishing up their soup, the principal entered. She had heard about their magic soup and wanted to make a contribution to the afternoon festivities. She delivered a batch of cookies that she and her teenage son had baked the night before. She also enjoyed a bowl of the soup and raved about its wonderful flavour.

A few minutes later, another visitor arrived. It was the minister from the church that was located across from the school. She also heard of the magic soup and came with some juice boxes for the class.

Their final visitor was the chair of the board for the local food bank. He came to announce that the local ministerial had heard about the magic soup party, and that they would work together with the food bank to start a breakfast program at the school. The food bank was also considering holding their own magic soup program each month—where they could help their clients learn some basic cooking skills and go home with their own pot of healthy soup.



The teacher was overwhelmed with emotion. A simple plan to help a few had exploded into a program that would help the school, maybe even the whole community. She looked down at the 'magic' rocks sitting at the bottom of her crock pot. Then she looked upwards just for a moment and said, "Thanks."

We often worry. We worry about others. About our children who have lost their jobs. About friends who are in ill health. About broken relationships. About our children who have left the church. About the church as a whole with its declining numbers.

We worry about ourselves. We worry about not having enough money to pay our bills or for retirement. We worry about upcoming health tests. We worry about our ailing memories. We worry about housing or cars that may be in need of repair.

We worry about our world. We worry about areas of the world that are experiencing war and conflict. We worry about huge issues, such as human trafficking, terrorism, or global warming. We worry about corruption in our leaders. We worry about drought and famine.

We worry. My mom was a self-proclaimed worrier. I have been known to do it myself. Yet, I don't think that worry has ever helped me. When I am stuck on the 401 highway in traffic trying to get to a meeting, I worry about being late. That worry doesn't get me there any faster and by the time I get there, it just leaves me drained and stressed and less able to participate in that meeting. When I worry about hosting a great meal for company, including a clean house, I sometimes spend more time and energy cleaning and cooking, and less energy enjoying my company. These days, I am worrying about how my children will fare at some of their summer day-camps. Will they meet friends? Will they like it? What generally happens is that they happily trot off to new activity and come home excited about going back. Even worrying about the health of friends and family doesn't help anyone to get better.

When we worry about little, or even big things, we focus on the negative. When we worry, we also forget to focus on all the wonderful gifts we have been given. When I worry about hosting a party, I forget to thank God for our amazing friends and family who will be attending. When I worry about being stuck on the 401, I forget about my blessing of having a job and a car to get me there. When my mother was ill, worry pulled me away from enjoying the time I had with her.

In the magic soup story, the teacher was worried, rightly so, about the children in her class. But, she took this worry, relied on God, and her worry turned to thanksgiving. This is what we also heard in the words of Psalm 63. This Psalm was likely written when David was in the wilderness. Even in

the wilderness, while many were out to kill David, he offers confidence and thanksgiving.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving, may we also learn to rely more fully on God, and then to forget our worries, and become a more thankful people.

**Hymn** # 625: Seek ye first

**Prayers of the People:**

We will take a few minutes to offer our own personal prayers to God. You were given slips of paper when you came in. One colour (name that colour) is to write out a few of your worries, your concerns. Then the other colour (name that colour) is for your prayers of thanksgiving. After a few minutes, we will offer those prayers to God, either spoken or in silence.

*<pause while people write out their prayers>*

As we pray, I will pause for us to offer our worries and thanksgivings to God. As we pass the basket, you can say your prayers verbally or you can offer them silently as you place your written slips in the basket. The basket will be sent around twice, first for our worries and then for our prayers of thanksgiving.

Dear God. Thank you for loving us. Thank you for being a God who is very present in our lives and in the world. We offer our worries to you now. Take them and turn our focus on them into a focus on you. (Pass the basket around. When the basket returns to you, continue the prayer.) We will not worry.

Generous God, you give us so much. You care for us daily, providing for our needs. Yet, we often forget to say thank you. We offer our prayers of thanksgiving to you now. (Pass the basket around. When the basket returns to you, continue the prayer.) May we always remember to give thanks for our countless blessings. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

**Offering:**

As God has generously given to us, we now give back to God. The offering will now be received.

**Offering Prayer:**

Generous God, we thank you for all you have given us. May the small portion that we give back make a difference in this world. In Jesus' name, we pray, amen.

**Hymn** #457 Now thank we all our God

**Blessings:**

Loving God, take our worries from us and send us forth to serve with confidence and to be thankful. Amen.

# CY

# A Week Lasts a Lifetime

CANADA**YOUTH**2014
July 7–12, 2014

Nurture

Their

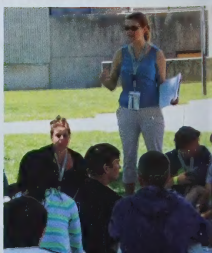
Faith

At a time in my life when I felt spiritually drained, drifting through the crowd, Canada Youth 2014 came and rejuvenated my soul. To pick one specific part of the week that stood out the most is an insurmountable task. If I were to pick of few things to recount as most memorable, it would be the worship services and the incredible community created that week. The support and presence of God during CY was palpable that week. I will forever be grateful to have had the opportunity to experience such a faith provoking time.

-Abbey, Youth Ministry Training Track

Canada youth was life changing for me as I met and created so many friendships that will last a lifetime.

-Rachel, Knox Presbyterian Church Oakville, Conference Track



## Canada Youth 2014 Facts

- There were 51 people from the Presbytery of London—the most from any one Presbytery.
- 37 of 45 presbyteries were represented.
- There were seven people at CY2014 who have been to all six Canada Youth events!
- Over 250 of our participants are first-timers.
- The theme for Canada Youth 2014 was Face-to-Face.

When The Presbyterian Church in Canada began their FLAMES initiative, they decided that the year 2000 would be the year to focus on children and youth. The largest event that year would be the first national gathering of youth within the denomination—Canada Youth. Over 600 youth and volunteers attended the first Canada Youth event, a five-day residential event at Brock University. It was so successful that it has become a regular event, and this summer marked the sixth Canada Youth event.

The event began with an ambitious three tracks:

- The Youth Track for high school youth.
- The Mission Track for young adults ages 18-25.
- The Youth Ministry Training Track for youth leaders ages 21+.

Much has remained the same at the conference. The conference still features contemporary, diverse, and creative worship. Fun recreation activities, music and dancing, crafts, concerts, prayer, Bible study and reflection continue to be part of this excellent conference. The hall are still filled with joyous laughter and energy. Ice cream is still plentiful! But a few things have also changes.

At Canada Youth 2014, the Mission Track was replaced with a new Discipleship Track for young adults. This change was made to fulfil the needs of young adults who are struggling to find a place in our congregations as they look for meaningful ways to nurture their faith. Another recent change is that the Life and Mission Agency reaffirmed its commitment to the event by making

the event more frequent. The event used to happen every three years, but now is planned for every second year.

The event has received significant financial assistance over the years from The Life and Mission Agency, Ewart Endowment, and the Women's Missionary Society. As well, congregations, local WMS groups, and numerous individuals have assisted young people and leaders from across the country to have this incredible faith building experience.

## Become Neighbours

An important component at Canada Youth this year was a day set aside to learn more about our Aboriginal brothers and sisters. The Thursday morning keynote speaker was Eugene Arcand, a Cree from Muskeg Lake First Nations in Saskatchewan and a Residential School survivor. He spoke about his time at a residential school and received a standing ovation from the leaders and participants.

The afternoon continued with the entire Canada Youth community participating in the Blanket Exercise. This experiential activity explores 500-years of history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people on Turtle Island (the name used for North America by some First Nations). The activity also looks at a few of the aspects of the relationship between The Presbyterian Church in Canada with the First Nations Peoples. Following this, participants were able to choose from electives which included videos, discussion, and Aboriginal crafts. It is understood that the journey of healing, is long, but it has started and this gathering was a part of that journey.

I had an excellent time at CY 2014. I had the opportunity to meet different people from different countries. I was so surprise to see how we can feel God and share our experiences. You can speak another language, you can have a different culture, and God still loves you.

It's so nice to share about my experience at the CY 2014 because I had a great time and I met people that I will bring with me to Brazil in my heart, in my mind, and in my memories. CY 2014 was a great experience for me in Canada and I will always remember this for all my life.

-Felipe Ramos de Abreu, 19-year-old
exchange student from Brazil,
currently living in Summerside, PEI.

"When I walked into the worship service the first night, I was overcome by the fellowship and love for Christ that was overfilling the auditorium. That was, without a doubt, my favorite part of CY!"

-Jessie, Knox Presbyterian
Church Oakville,
Conference Track

# In Memoriam

### Jean Gray Campbell

A memorial service was held for Jean Gray Campbell on July 3 at Kildonan Community Church. She passed away on June 24, 2014. Jean G Campbell was a daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, colleague, and friend. Her smile is often the first thing remembered by those who knew her. She had the gift of hospitality, offering a billet to visiting choir or church folk or hosting wonderful meals that brought together people of various ages and backgrounds.

Raised in Toronto, she attended Glenview Presbyterian Church, and was educated at St. Clement's School and Trinity College of the University of Toronto. Before marriage, she worked for Confederation Life in their translation department. Her facility with languages led to her being given war-time work in a secret position about which she would never speak. Following her marriage and the war, the family moved to Thornhill where she worshipped at Thornhill Presbyterian Church. Then came the move to Winnipeg in 1955 where she would remain. She was very active in First Presbyterian Church, serving with the Women's Missionary Society and as an elder. She served as Presbyterial and Synodical President and as Representative Elder to the Presbytery of Winnipeg. She also compiled, wrote, and edited, A Lively Story: Historical Sketches on the Women's Missionary Society (Western Division) of The Presbyterian Church in Canada 1864–1989.

A long-time supporter of Winnipeg Inner City Missions, she was honoured as "Grandma" at Anishinabe. In her later years, she was one of the first residents of the Parkway Retirement Community where she enjoyed friends old and new.

### Joanne Isabelle Instance (Wright)

Joanne Isabelle Instance passed away peacefully on May 23, 2014 surrounded by her loving family and into the arms of her Saviour. Joanne was a devoted wife, beloved mother, grandmother, great-

grandmother, and friend. Her family was the main focus in her life. Joanne's unselfishness, love, faith, and values were instilled in her family and all she met. Mum's courage and determination are the greatest legacy to all who knew her. While raising her family and caring for her parents in their time of need, Mum found the time to start a part-time career with CPR and the Children's Hospital, and later worked with Public Works Canada. Joanne was also an active volunteer, devoting many hours to organizations such as CGIT, WMS, WICC, WICM, Prescawa, Willow Senior's Centre, and Alpha House. Her faith was lived out with her work in the Presbyterian church at all levels. Mum's contributions were recognized by the numerous awards she received both professionally and as a volunteer.

Her granddaughter, Kella DeWit, wrote a wonderful memorial in the following excerpt:

> My Grandmother, Joanne Isabelle Instance (Wright), was a woman of great faith, grace, and determination. When I think of my Grandmother, I think of "the look" as a child growing up, I can remember her wanting us to make the right choices, and when she thought we did not make the right choice, she gave us "the look." This look was very prominent, and any person who knew my grandmother, has seen, or more likely been given this look. This look, down to the core of it, was my Grandmother. She was strong, determined, and can look at you with full disapproval, but you just knew it was because she cared, loved, and only wanted the best for you, and the people around you.
>
> Joanne had strong faith and determination and this was with her through all of her cancer treatments. She amazed all her doctors, time and time again. She would go in, and the doctor would inform her: "I am sorry Joanne, but your cancer levels are so high, I do not think you should plan that cruise with your family." Well my Grandmother would not have it. She was bound and determined to fight,

**Joanne Instance, Carole Bilyk, and Kella DeWit**

and she did, and when the doctors did her blood work again, they were amazed at how diminished her cancel levels had gotten. Our family breathed a sigh of relief, as another vacation, Easter, or Christmas came around and Grandma was still with us.

This determination also showed at the 2014 Presbyterian Women's Gathering event and the WMS 100th Anniversary in Toronto this May. She had been part of the WMS for many years and even served as their national president. She attended this event just days before her death. As a member of the planning team for the Gathering, I was already in Toronto and I was able to attend the 100th Anniversary and hold my Grandmother's hand as she introduced me to people. I felt proud to be an Instance. I felt proud to be Joanne Instance's Granddaughter and I could feel the love and care she felt when introducing me to other people.

Being known as Joanne's Granddaughter is big shoes to fill. One of the people I had the honour to meet with my Grandmother was Pauline Brown, one of the recipients of the Presbyterian Women of Faith award. My Grandmother called me over during dinner and said to Pauline, "I would like you to meet my Granddaughter." Pauline said to me, "Your Grandmother is such a strong woman, talk about a woman of faith, what a great role-model to have in your life," and I responded with tears in my eyes, "I know."

The journey my Grandmother has travelled in her past 78 years is a testament to Christians, and to other people. She is the epitome of a kind, graceful, loving, and faithful woman.

## Remembering

Christine Venema
WMS Alberton,
Alberton ON

Eleanor Wood
Burlington East,
Burlington ON

Joyce Miller
WMS Marian Ritchie
Cromarty, ON

Eleanor Ballantyne
WMS at New St. James,
London ON

Stella Smith
Knox WMS,
Morrisburg ON

Joanne Isabel Instance
St. James Presbyterian,
Winnipeg MB

MAKING CONNECTIONS
Walking Side by Side
A Journey toward Healing & Reconciliation
Walking Side by Side
A Healing Journey for Children and Youth

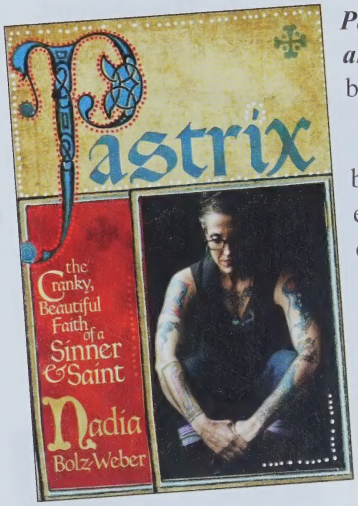
***Walking Side by Side: A Journey Toward Healing and Reconciliation***
by Barbara Strang

***Walking Side by Side: A Healing Journey for Children and Youth***
by Barbara Strang

This year, the PCC mission study consists of both an adult and a children and youth study on the issue of healing and reconciliation with Canada's Aboriginal Peoples. Both studies consist of six sessions and include a number of activity sheets and handouts.

The adult study is extensive and uses a wide variety of activities to educate about and reflect on the story of residential schools. Strang encourages groups to use symbols, video clips, readings, and movement. Obviously, the topic is a challenging one and really takes us on a journey. We begin by hearing about the pain suffered at residential schools and then discover the importance of knowing this truth. Then we move onto how we might ask for forgiveness and how we can commit ourselves to a roll in this process. The study also encourages us to engage in social justice activities and to develop relationships with Aboriginal people.

The children and youth study covers similar topics, but changes the languages to be more appropriate for a younger audience. However, this is still a challenging study for children, especially as children hear about other children that were forcibly taken from their homes. Yet, it is an important part of our Canadian history and a part of our church history and teaching it can help future generations "to help right the wrongs of past generations." I love that it teaches children the importance of admitting past wrongs, asking for forgiveness, and working to make things right. Certainly, I think this study would be appropriate for junior high and high school youth. For younger children, you might choose to use only parts of the study.

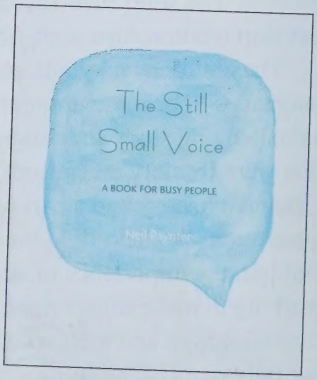



***Pastrix: The Cranky, Beautiful Faith of a Sinner and Saint***
by Nadia Bloz-Weber

I am slightly reluctant to review this book, because although I loved this book, it is not for everyone. Bloz-Weber was previously a stand-up comic, and some of her language might be more appropriate to a comedy stage than to the church. Also, she takes us to places where we might not want to go. She often attacks the conservative and even the mainline church.

Yet, I loved this book. She is a woman of courage. She is a courageous pastor, who has beaten the odds, and is serving God in amazing ways and amazing places. And her theology, at times, almost brought me to tears. It is grace filled and forgiving. It is a message for all of, even amidst our sin and brokenness. Bolz-Wber says, "God's grace is not defined as God being forgiving to us even though we sin. Grace is when God is a source of wholeness, which makes up for my failings. My failings hurt me and others and even the planet, and God's grace to me is that my brokenness is not the final word … Grace isn't about God creating humans and flawed beings and then acting all hurt when we inevitably fail and then stepping in like the hero to grant us grace—like saying, "Oh, it's OK, I'll be the good guy and forgive you." It's God saying, "I love the world too much to let your sin define you and be the final word. I am a God who makes all things new.""

***The Still Small Voice: A Book for Busy People***
by Neil Paynter




This is a book of daily readings for the year. Each reading is very short, some as short as six words, and come from both those involved in contemporary spirituality, such as many associated with the Iona Community, and other more ancient voices, such as Teresa of Avila. Many of the readings offer great depth in few words and would be great a great reflection to start a prayer or for journaling.

# Update on the Closure of The Book Room

Just to update you, there have been some developments in the steps undertaken to close The Book Room.

Effective immediately, steps will be taken to sell-off the inventory. Starting September, all inventory (except for PCC resources) will be sold at 40% discount and all sales will be final. No new stock will be added to the current inventory. Please check The Book Room website (www.thebookroom.ca) for available stock.

As well, it will no longer be possible to offer book displays at events. WMS groups who would like a display sent out to their meetings will have to purchase the items being mailed to them as final sale and will not be able to return unsold items.

Susan Clarke finished her work as Manager of the Book Room as of August 1, 2014. We appreciate Susan's many years of service and employment with the WMS; we will miss her friendly presence and dedication to the WMS. As of September, Paulette Jeffrey will begin working part-time in the Book Room as Resource Consultant to help sell-off the inventory and other related transitional steps towards the closing of The Book Room.

The next several months will be a time of change and adjusting. Please bear with us through this transition.

# Circulation News

The circulation packages for groups were set to be in the mail in late-August, so hopefully your *Glad Tidings* contact will have received it by the time you are reading it. With all the changes this past year (staff and mailing house), I ask that you are particularly diligent in checking to be certain your address is correct and for missing or extra subscribers.

If you are individual subscriber, you will also be receiving your renewal notice shortly. Again, please check your mailing address before returning the form.

Again, due to changes this year, we are only able to accept cheque as payment for your *Glad Tidings* subscription.

If you are able, consider giving a gift subscription to a woman in your church. This is just one of the ways we increase our readership, and some groups have even gained new WMS members from giving a gift subscription to a women. It is also a great way to educate others about mission within the WMS and The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

# Mission In Action

**David and Anna Pandy-Szekeres**
**Brian Johnston**
**Eastern Europe**

I would just like to report in a few short lines that we successfully completed the English summer camp program at the Reformed Church Secondary School in Nagybereg. There were 115 students in grades 8–11 who participated and there were eleven teachers. The program was deemed to be a complete success by the school's organizers, and the students have made good progress in their knowledge of English by the end of the program.

The organizers reported that Brian was a wonderful addition to the staff; he helped to provide not only a most vibrant sound with his method of teaching music, but was considered a most delightful person by the students. I very much appreciate having a colleague like Brian within so-called shouting distance. He is someone that is willing to help out when we are in need and the school's organizers were so taken by his successful methods that they have invited him to come back to do a music workshop whenever he has a chance. Soli Deo gloria! David

## Overseas Staff Birthdays

**October**
8 – Nelson Zuniga, Nicaragua
23 – Glenn Inglis, Malawi

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# In the Society

**Brockville** Presbyterial met on May 29 at Knox Church in Iroquois ON. June Graham welcomed everyone, and President Janet Jones constituted the meeting with prayer. Then Janet along with Catherine Blatch led the worship service on the theme, Burst Out in Service, underlying our work is God's work.

Reports from The Presbyterian Women's Gathering celebrated that the 600 women in attendance had donated $16,000 to PWS&D projects in Syria. We also heard about the inspiring worship, popular workshop topics, and uplifting testimonies from speakers, such as Kim Phuc and Karen Horst. Margaret Reynolds reported that Pauline Brown and Lois Klempa, both from our area, were named Women of Faith.

Our guest speaker, Kathy Spruit, spoke about special medical services available in our area. She encouraged everyone to be prepared for a time when they might need extra care in order to enjoy and sustain a good quality of life. Then Mary Moorehead conducted a quiz on mental health, encouraging participation and recognizing the stigma attached.

Bruce Kemp, our afternoon speaker, was introduced by Donna Wilson, who also presented him with a WMS Life-time Membership for his work with The Presbyterian Church in Canada as an armed forces Chaplain and representative of both The Bible Society of Canada and The Rotary Club. In Alberta, he worked with the Dogrib tribe. Also with the Bible Society, he has travelled to Cairo to present Bibles to garbage collectors and their families who live at the dump. He has also visited China and the Ukraine. As a Rotary member, Bruce travelled to Ecuador to construct schools, homes, sanitary units, and health clinics. He is able to speak Spanish so he also acted as a translator.

**Brockville Presbyterial May 29th presentation to Rev. Bruce Kemp of a Life Membership into the WMS by Donna Wilson of St. Paul's Presbyterian Church, Winchester, ON.**

**Barrie** Presbyterial held their Annual Meeting on May 6 at Jubilee Presbyterian Church, Stayner ON. Rev. Darren May brought greetings and our president, Mary Veale-Parker welcomed us and constituted the meeting. The Esson group presented the devotions on the theme, Be Anxious for Nothing, from Philippians 4:6. Reports were presented and approved and Jill Pardy led a memorial service for nine members, who had passed away in 2013.

Katherine Allen, our guest speaker, talked about her trip last year to Kenya and South Africa. She went on several safaris and visited the Nairobi Giraffe Center, a Maasai tribal village, and termite hills. She also visited the former home of Nelson Mandela and the prison where he spent 18 years.

This great day was completed with a dinner of ham and scalloped potatoes from the Stayner group.

**Waterloo Wellington** Presbyterial held a memorable Spring Rally on May 10 at Duff's Presbyterian Church, Puslinch ON. We began with desserts and then the Rev. Marty Molengraff welcomed us on behalf of the Session and congregation, and Eloise Gardner led us in thoughtful devotions. President Wilma Welsh offered a warm welcome to everyone, including WMS Council President Betty Siverns, and our special guests from India, Dr. Sonlata Wilson and Dr. Subhashini Dutta, who were in Canada to attend The Presbyterian Women's Gathering and the General Assembly.

In their presentations, Dr. Wilson and Dr. Dutta, who are both ob-gyn physicians, focused on their efforts to improve maternal and child health through the Community Health Network in Jobat, Hatpiplia, and Indore Christian Hospitals. Volunteers from each village are trained to provide advice on hygiene, nutrition, immunization, and encourage pre- and post-natal care for mothers and babies. As a result, the mortality rate for both mothers and babies has steadily declined, proving that the work is worthy of our ongoing support.

The offering from this meeting was divided between mission projects and the Waterloo-Wellington Presbyterials ongoing commitment to sending our knitted pneumonia-prevention vests and caps to the Christian hospitals in the Bhil area of India.

Rev. Linda Paquette gave the benediction.

**Lanark-Renfrew** Presbyterial held their June Meeting in Westminster Church, Smiths Falls ON, on May 24. President Lois Patchell welcomed the ladies; we sang Morning Has Broken, and then enjoyed devotions on the abundant blessings of God, which were led by Betty Fraser-Smith.

Joan Hilliard reported on the Synodical meeting held in Montreal on April 12. Then, the Rev. Barry Mack shared the history of the women who had done mission work in the Montreal area, and Druse Bryan spoke on her trip for the opening of the hostel in Jobat, India.

The Synodical banner which was at the WMS 100th Anniversary, and the large photograph of the past presidents of the Quebec-Eastern Ontario Synodical were both on display. Marion Neill shared experiences from the WMS Anniversary, which took place in Richmond Hill ON.

Betty Siverns, national president of the WMS, was our afternoon speaker and she spoke about her trip to Afghanistan in April 2013 with Janet Brewer and Joan Smith. The three issues focused on were Maternal Health, Girls Education, and Food Security. Then Betty spoke of her trip to India to dedicate the new school hostel in Jobat that the WMS built. Finally, Betty spoke of the 90th Anniversary of the Women's Conference that she, as one of 2800 women, attended in Kenya. Each of the three countries has many, many problems, and we must remember to be thankful for the blessings we have in Canada.

Lois Patchell closed the meeting in prayer.

**Sarnia** Presbyterial met at Centre Road Presbyterian Church on June 5 for a potluck luncheon. The theme for the meeting was 'Seeds of Change,' and there were 30 women present from Strathroy, Petrolia, and Sarnia.

Reports were given from the 100th Anniversary, The Presbyterian Women's Gathering, and Southwestern Ontario Synodical.

Janet Brewer, the WMS treasurer, was our guest speaker, and she spoke about her trip to Afghanistan in May 2013. Those who went were looking at projects in the rural areas to see if money is being used properly. Projects funded by PWS&D are

**Photo: from Left to Right is Guest Speaker Janet Brewer, Marion Perrie, Karen DeLong (She bought the wall hanging at The Women's Gathering.)**

Education for Girls, Maternal and Child Health, and a Sustainable Food Program (Canadian Foodgrains) where basic farming techniques are taught. The idea behind these projects is to have the local people learn how to do the work so they can see the rewards from their efforts, and continue to better the lives of their people in health care, farming, and education. Many of these people have been refugees for more than a generation and have to be taught how to farm. It still is a very dangerous country, but more girls are getting an education.

**Joan Wagner reporting at Sarnia Presbyterial.**

Then, Marion Perrie led devotions based on the Samaritan Woman. She asked us to reach out to all people regardless of their plight in life as Jesus had.

President Beverley Cassel closed the meeting with prayer.

**St. Andrew's WMS, Mount Forest ON, held a special Munch for Mission on June 8 to celebrate 100 years of service. The money raised supported Tidzalerana Club in Blantyre which supports children with disabilities and their families.**

**Photo: Debra and Rev. Mike Burns, Jean Mackay, Eleanor Huffman, and Marilyn Lamont.**

**Montreal's Kensington Church celebrated 100/150 years with a special tea on May 28. Grace Thornley Brown, President, chaired the meeting. Druse Bryan spoke and several associate members attended and were honoured for their support.**

The Boarding Home Ministry Team from **Paris** Presbyterian Church completed their fifth Christmas party with residents from the Darling Street Home in Brantford. The team began after the Rev. Rodger Hunter spoke at our WMS mission awareness Sunday many years ago. Rodger provided guidance for the team who visit the residents regularly.

The last five years have been a time of joy and sorrow, shared lives, celebrations, music, and parties, as well as much reflection of the deeper things in life. It took several visits to gain the trust of the residents. Now, when new residents come, regulars are very encouraging and help the new residents to join in our sharing time. The owner of the home has established a compassionate, but firm presence and has been welcoming to our visits often asking for our prayers for situations in which he finds himself.

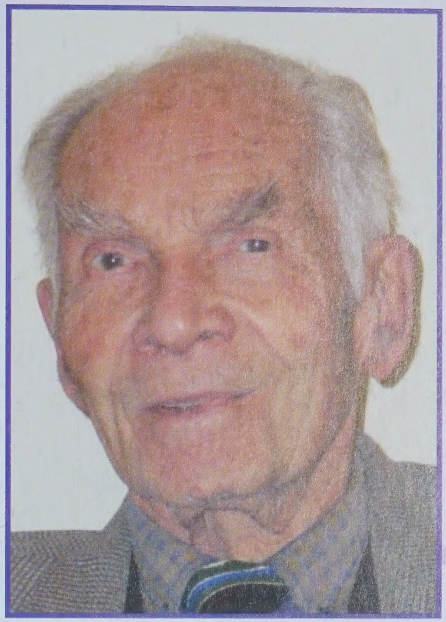
Once a month, three of our female members visit a group home in Paris where four residents are in long-term care. They welcome our visits, although two residents can't vocalize their feeling, their actions reveal how happy they are to see us. We share conversation and goodies with them and their staff.

The prayer shawls that were given to Rodger Hunter are now be given out to residents by us as a remembrance of the Lord's love for each of them.

When we first began, our team was very apprehensive about this outreach and put much prayer into their commitment. The team members continue to be faithful to this mission, so much so that not one visit has been missed in five years! The spiritual growth and blessings that God has given to each member has been far greater than the concerns we had in the beginning.

provisionaries

**Planting seeds of hope.**
**For generations to come.**



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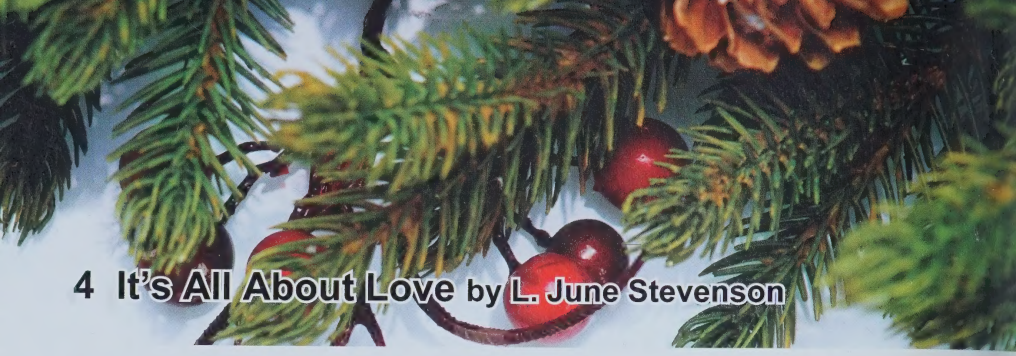
November/December 2014



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Glad Tidings

**November/December 2014**
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**DESIGN:** Alexis McKeown

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Canada


*Glad Tidings* reports on aspects of the Women's Missionary Society on all levels. *Glad Tidings* challenges concerned Christians to reflect on their faith through articles and reports related to mission and social justice issues, locally, nationally, and internationally. *Glad Tidings* through its content, encourages readers to become informed, educated, inspired, and motivated to action. *GladTidings* provides a forum for a broad spectrum of opinion and information, thus the views expressed in features, news reports, letters, and book reviews are not necessarily endorsed by the WMS or by the Editor.


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# Editorial

*And the word became flesh and moved into the neighbourhood. (John 1:14, The Message)*

Sometimes I just love how Eugene Peterson translates certain passages of scripture. This would be one of them. Jesus, moving into the neighbourhood. I think we sometimes forget the power of Jesus living among us, fully human. What would it look like if the fully human Jesus was with us today? Would I, could I, follow him? Would I join the disciples to proclaim his message? Or would I just see him as someone a little too radical. Sure we all want peace on earth. Of course, I want to take care of God's creation. But to give everything, leave my comfortable life and job. Well, that is just too much.

Yet, at Christmas, that is just what we remember. Jesus did walk on this earth. He preached a radical message. Jesus invited people to follow him. He asked people to leave their comfort zone, their jobs, even their families, and to follow. Christ did indeed move into the neighbourhood, and he didn't leave.

So, what does this look like as we walk around our neighbourhoods? I pray this Christmas that we become just a little more radical. I pray that we invite our neighbours into our homes and provide radical hospitality, whether they are Jewish, Muslim, atheist, or Sikh. I pray that we open our Church doors for more than just a few hours each week. That we invite others to worship and consider what worship might look like when we change it to meet the spiritual needs of those who are not there, not our own needs. I pray that we become more tolerant in our congregations of children … of the elderly … of the homeless … of the rich … of the outsider. I pray that we look at our bounty and consider giving less to those that have this Christmas, and more to those that don't have. I pray that we attend one less function this Christmas, and spend more time attending to our hearts. I pray that we become better stewards of the earth this Christmas, reducing our overall consumption.

Jesus is in our neighbourhood. We are blessed to be his hands and feet. This Christmas, how will your neighbourhood look?

# It's All Advent

*At Christmas time, everything in our lives seems to come together like a weaving. In its simplicity, the Christmas story brings us back to the basics of love, family, life, and politics. Christmas puts sparkle into our lives on seeing the beauty and wonder of the season.*

*We are transported from the fresh love of a young couple, to the beauty and awe of birth, to the treacherous designs of a power hungry king, who orders the death of innocent children. These events, so symbolic of life, remind us of a God, who longs for companionship and for peace on earth—a God of love.*

Preparation:

Advent runs from the fourth Sunday before Christmas through Christmas Eve, this year from November 30 to December 24. We will consider many of the common symbols of the season. To begin your preparations, hang a line of string across the kitchen or other appropriate place to make a display area. Ensure that it is heavy enough to hold the material that we will be hanging throughout this study—mainly paper, sticky notes, or cardboard. Put some clothespins nearby. Alternatively, your display area can be a piece of chart paper or a board on the refrigerator or other wall space. Have easy access to a Bible, a small notebook, paper, glue, scissors, pens, crayons, and magazines.

Each day, begin by reading the scripture. If you are doing this devotion with others, discuss what the passage says to you. If reading this alone, pause for a

# About Love Devotions

by L. June Stevenson

moment after your reading to consider what the passage means to you. Then, read the meditation. How does it relate to the scripture passage?

November 30 Prepare the Way
Read: Isaiah 40:3

Meditation: We prepare for the coming of the Lord just as John the Baptist did long years ago. He was the messenger for his time; we are the messengers of today. Pray for your heart to be open to what God is saying to you.

Activity: Put up an Advent Calendar, especially if you have young children or grandchildren.

Today, one thinks of *preparation*.

December 1 Anticipate the Lord's Coming
Read: Psalm 27:14

Meditation: Mother stirs the ingredients and prepares the wrapping. We wait for the puddings to ripen. She hangs them up in the porch. That is my memory from when I was a child. Today, we may cook something different. Yet, we still anticipate the coming of the Lord's own and ready our hearts for him to enter.

Activity: Draw and colour or cut out a kitchen symbol to represent baking (rolling pin, cookie cutter, apron). Hang your picture on your line or post on your sheet.

Practise *patience* today.

December 2 Preparing to Send Greetings
Read: Psalm 43:3

Meditation: At this time of year, we especially remember those for whom we care: long-time friends, relatives, people whom we often don't see during the year. Our memory of them is still precious and we want to remember them.

Activity: Prepare lists for greeting cards noting if they are for overseas, local delivery, or personal delivery. Take a few minutes to reflect on each person to whom you will send a message. Pray for their health and safety. Write the name of one special person on your paper, or write it on a sheet of paper and pin to your line.

*Reflect* on friends of the past.

December 3 Sending Out
Read: Ephesians 6:18

Meditation: Pray is powerful. As God's people we have been given the gift and responsibility of prayer. Think of God's people around the world today and offer a prayer for them.

Activity: Write out your greeting cards. If you have children in your life, let them contribute by making some of your cards using last year's received card or even by making a card on the computer. They can also help by adding stickers and decorations to the envelopes. Vow to persevere through the week until the task is done. When you are done, hang or post a used postage stamp or a card from last year onto your line or paper.

*Perseverance* gets a job done.

December 4 Close to Home
Read: Ecclesiastes 5:18

Meditation: There are many people close to home that you want to remember at this time of year: the mail carrier, the paper delivery person, your hairdresser, a teacher. Think of those who you want to say 'thank you' to and plan what you will give to them. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for all those, who assist you from day to day.

Activity: Put a note or sticky on the line sheet with "Thank You" on it.

Be *thankful* for all those, who assist you in daily living.

December 5 Paying it Forward
Read: Matthew 25:40b

Meditation: How important it is to assist people in your neighbourhood. If you can, shovel a senior's sidewalk. A single parent could use an extra gift or two for her young children. The Food Bank always needs donations. Give as you are able.

Activity: Look outside of your home for ways to assist others in need. Give as God has given to you. Put up an empty food box on the line or a picture of food on your chart.

*Share* the abundance God has given you.

December 6 Ribbons and Baubles
Read: Luke 6:38

Meditation: For some people, Christmas is the ultimate time of the year for giving in excess. Disguised as loving the receiver and wanting to give much to them, givers sometimes cannot afford the gifts they buy and are left with nothing but large bills after Christmas. There are many ways to give inexpensively and to show how much you really care. Simple or home made gifts say as much about the giver as the receiver. A person gives something of themselves when they make a gift because they truly value the receiver.

Activity: Today, make one homemade gift. Encourage the creativity of children as they show their love and respect for family members, teachers, and mentors. I have heard from many teachers who still say the best gift is a handwritten note from a child.

*Give*, no strings attached.

December 7 A Young Woman's Trust
Read: Luke 1:26; 30–31

Meditation: Mary was a young woman of great faith. Although an angel brought strange words to her, she accepted that God was using her, and declared herself to be his servant. "For nothing is impossible with God," she said.

Activity: Cut out or draw an angel and hang it up. Think about a young woman, a teenager even, having such a great burden given to her. What does it mean to you to put all your trust in God?

*Believe* and obey.

December 8 Family Gifts
Read: Matthew 1:20

Meditation: Joseph loved Mary and wanted them to be a family. He heeded the Angel Gabriel's message and took Mary to belong to his family. Our families are precious to us. Plan your gifts for those closest to you wisely and carefully. Remember, gifts do not need to be expensive. The best gifts are often gifts of time.

Activity: Think of gifts whereby you share your time or talent: babysit so a young couple can go on a date; prepare and serve a meal for a special occasion; or volunteer to do a tedious once-a-year task with, or for, a friend.

*Trust* in God's word.

December 9 Wrap it Up!
Read: 2 Corinthians 9:7

Meditation: I love wrapping gifts. I always try to recycle and reuse, but sometimes I just can't resist a special wrap or bow. For me it is acknowledging how special the season is and how special people are to me.

Activity: Wrapping doesn't have to be expensive. Purchase wrap the year before when the after-Christmas sales are on. Create your own using plain paper bags and pasting a Christmas decoration on them. Use newspaper—the comics or sales flyers or even the news. Today, look for creative items in your home that might be recycled into wrap paper or decorations for presents.

*Reuse*, recycle to the best of your ability.

December 10 The Friendly Creatures
Read: Matthew 6:26

Meditation: The little donkey groans softly under the weight of his burden: a young mother soon to give birth. This baby is special, quiet and light in the womb. The young woman is radiant with anticipation. The animals in the stable welcome his company and his warmth. Along with the donkey, they too welcome history in the making.

Activity: Feed the birds and animals, who look for shelter in your garden. Remember that like a little sparrow, each one is precious to God. In our backyard we have skunks, rabbits, opossum, moles, and other creatures. We don't need to encourage them, but we do need to treat them with respect. Pin a picture of a bird or local animal on your line, or post one on your paper.

Show *kindness* to animals and birds today.

December 11 Making Room
Read: Luke 2:4–5

Meditation: The innkeeper is abrupt and impatient. This unexpected census brings in more business, harder work, and trying circumstances. "No room at all," he shouted at the young couple and then he saw the fatigue in their eyes and the woman's swelling belly. "Well, there is the barn. It's warm and clean. Might be just what you need." Little did he know the part in history that gesture would play.

Activity: What could you do for newborn babies or for pregnant or new mothers in your area? Call local Social Services for phone numbers of agencies. Make hats for preemies in a local hospital. Call a women's hostel and ask what they need. Help out at a centre for youth. Find one way to help this season.

*Pray* for the challenges that today's youth face.

December 12 The Blessing of the Animals
Read: Luke 2:8–11

Meditation: Gentle farm animals witness the birth of Jesus. Shepherds from the nearby hills bring their lambs to see the new-born king. The happy parents and Jesus are blessed by their warm breath and by their gentleness.

Activity: If you can, visit a local animal shelter. Consider helping with a task or making a donation. Cut out or draw some animals found in the stable and pin or post them.

*Smile* at someone unexpectedly today.

December 13 The Gifts of Kings
Read: Matthew 2:1–2

Meditation: Little is really known about the men, who travelled from the East, Babylon, or Persia perhaps, bringing costly gifts to pay homage to a

Savior whose birth was foreseen in the stars. Even their number is unknown but Caspar, Balthazar, and Melchior are the three most commonly named.

Activity: Make replicas of the gifts the wise men brought: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Or think about what you might offer to one as special as baby Jesus if you had the opportunity. Hang or post these items.

*Pray* for the health and safety of babies everywhere.

December 14 Storytime
Read: John 1:14–15

Meditation: Telling stories to children is a delight for many parents. As a teacher, I enjoyed story time most when I read from the same book every day. Telling the stories of Jesus is a wonderful opportunity for people of every age to share the Good News together.

Activity: If you are alone or with others, think about the stories from the Bible that you have loved over the years. Why were some so special or so meaningful? What is your favourite Bible story? Draw a picture of your favourite story to hang or post.

*Resolve* to share your favourite stories with others.

December 15 Starry Night
Read: Matthew 2:10

Meditation: The stars were important symbols in earlier times. To many, they were a mystery. Their appearance and/or arrangement could be frightening. At the time of Jesus' birth, one star stood out from all the others in brilliance. It was a sign that the Messiah was born. Last year, a large star from the Christmas pageant was left up accidentally in our sanctuary and it seemed very appropriate.

Activity: Find or make the biggest, brightest star to brighten your home. Hang or post your star either with your current Advent display or somewhere else in your home to remind you of the Messiah's upcoming birth.

*Brighten* your home with a star.

December 16 The Reason for the Season
Read: Luke 2:6–7

Meditation: A story circulated about a child in a mall looking at the lineup

for Santa. The child looked elsewhere and then asked his mother, "Where is the line for Jesus?" Never forget during this sometimes hectic season why it is that we celebrate and whose birthday it really is.

Activity: Draw or cut out something that makes you really happy, something that symbolizes the wonder of Christmas.

*Pray* that Jesus may be central in your life and that others may share the joy.

December 17 Gloria in Excelsis Deo
Read: Luke 2:13–14

Meditation: Music is a blessing so many enjoy. So many wonderful pieces have been written about the birth of Christ, especially in the early years by the Masters. Crowds still flock to hear Handel's Messiah at Christmas. Thank God for the gift of music.

Activity: Tonight, celebrate in song. Sing carols or play CDs of your favorite carols.

*Open* yourself up and let the music of the season fill you.

December 18 A Word of Comfort
Read: Isaiah 40:1–2

Meditation: How satisfying finally to receive a pardon for one's offences or a reprieve from a doubtful situation. The Israelites are at last right with God and for them the future holds peace and security. We aren't promised a fairy tale ending to our trials and tribulations, but we do know that God walks with us to the end of time.

Activity: Who can you comfort today? Bad things happen to good people. Innocent children and adults are sacrificed on the altars of greed and inhumanity. Call or send a message to someone, who has suffered a grievous injustice.

Sometimes just *being* there is the greatest comfort you can give.

December 19 Walking with Jesus
Read: John 15:12–14

Meditation: We have moved from a baby in a manger to a grown man, who is confident and secure in his ministry. He commands our attention, our love, and our service. As we celebrate his coming once again into the world, we renew our commitment to being his people and to opening our lives up to him.

Activity: This is a very quiet time of reflection in our lives. Think about your journey with Jesus. Reflect on what Jesus has meant in your life. Renew your commitment to his service.

*Pray* that Jesus may come into your heart again and again as we celebrate his coming on earth.

December 20 A Feast
Read: Luke 14:23

Meditation: Eating and drinking from special recipes is usual around holidays like Christmas. Families make food from favourite recipes; others try new ones or begin new traditions. More important is that we share with friends, neighbours, and those less fortunate. Think about your favourite Christmas recipes and reflect on the friends and family that you have shared them with over the years.

Activity: Food is less about eating than about sharing. Eating is less about feeling good than about making others feel good. Make or purchase special treats to help people feel good about being together. Invite others in to share their special treats, deliver them to neighbours, or donate them to a program that helps others.

Make *specialty items* part of your Food Bank donations.

December 21 Celebrate
Read: Luke 2:14

Meditation: Families celebrate birthdays with balloons, treats, and loud noises. People are special and the fact that you have been born on a certain day and are a part of our lives is very special. Letting people know they are special is honouring their lives. Jesus is so special in our lives that we want to let others know of the great joy we have.

Activity: Celebrate a life tonight. Put up some balloons, have some noise

makers and sing a lively Christian song, such as "Give me oil in my lamp," "I've got the joy, joy; joy," or "Tell me the old, old story." Celebrate that Jesus is born. Praise God. Hang a balloon on your string, or post a picture of a birthday cake or balloon on your paper.

"*Come* into my heart, Lord Jesus."

December 22 A Light for the Nations
Read: Isaiah 42:6

Meditation: Light is a most precious gift of God. To be able to see clearly is a blessing. To watch fireworks, to sit in front of a blazing fire, to watch a candle burn down is very satisfying. Thank God that we have Christ who is the light of the world and our lives.

Activity: Lights make the season brighter and reflect our belief that Jesus is our Light. If you are able, and also being eco-conscious, surround yourself and your home with light—outside and in. Give gifts of non-flammable lights to others.

*Brighten* someone's world today with a "just because" card or gift!

December 23 My Beloved Son
Read: Mark 1:9–11

Meditation: We often don't understand baptism, but we can always take a moment to remember the wonder of baptism. Think about your own baptism and the baptism of friends and family and be thankful.

Activity: Draw a picture of a simple dove to add to your display.

*Picture* yourself in the scene from Mark and relax in the wonder of it.

December 24 Amen
Read: John 1:1–5

Meditation: Be still and know that I am God.

*Rest* today. You are ready for the Lord's coming.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

Luke 2:10–11

# Christmas Traditions

by Kim Webster

*It was a quiet afternoon and we were making a few new decorations at our dining room table. My two-year-old son was creating just enough havoc to keep things interesting while my five-year-old desperately tried to make the perfect ornament for our Advent tree.*

As I sipped my tea and thought I had it all together this year, my five-year-old sighed and said, "I can't wait until we get our Christmas pajamas on Christmas Eve." I calmly replied, "Christmas pajamas?!" "Yes," she said, "You know the pajamas we get every year on Christmas Eve? It's my favourite Christmas tradition!" The fact was that at just one time I bought my dear daughter what I believed to be "winter" pajamas. To her this one-time event has become now her favourite Christmas tradition. This was certainly news to me! Though, I must admit that I did go to the mall that evening to purchase matching Christmas pyjamas for my two lovely children.

Christmas is a time filled with chaos and fun, joy and family. Children thrive off routines and love tradition. In our case, we were not even aware we had a Christmas pajamas tradition until we were informed of this by our daughter! Our family continues to work on balancing the craziness of December with the beautiful rhythm of Advent. We try to focus much of our early-December time on Advent and give our children the opportunity to experience joyful waiting. The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival" so we talk a lot about getting ready for Christmas, and the things we need to do to prepare. In the minds of my young children this means getting ready for Jesus' birthday. Activities throughout Advent—such as making decorations for our Advent tree—mark this time as something special.

This simple tradition of making Advent decorations was something we started several years ago. The idea was borrowed from The Messy Table, a blog written by Katie Munnik for the Presbyterian Record. This is my favourite Advent activity. I gather a basket of crafty goodness— glitter, crayons, paper, old Christmas cards,

pom poms, paint, anything crafty I could find really. Each day, we create one Advent decoration. The first year we hung them on a piece of twine in our dining room using clothes pins and ribbon. Last year, a birch tree from the woods behind my parent's house became our Advent Tree. We placed it in our family room and filled it with all of our creations. Some decorations were elaborate works of art created over an afternoon, others were simple and made while waiting for dinner to cook. Both kids love this, and know that with each day we had one more decoration and that brings us closer to Christmas morning.

Each night during Advent, we also light Advent candles at our dinner table. I think we all love the candlelight, it adds a little something special to a weeknight meal. Our wreath is a simple round slice of a birch tree with four holes drilled around the edge, and then one in the centre. I use beeswax tapers, just because I love them. Each Sunday night, we talk about which candle was lit in worship that day and what it means. Throughout the week, when we light the candle we repeat its meaning, while constantly reminding the youngest that although he loves the candle he cannot play with it—peace and joy all rolled into one dinner time!

For our daughter's first Christmas, we purchased a beautiful wooden nativity set. It is painted with bright colours and sturdy enough for children three years and older to handle and play with the pieces (it is still a choking hazard for young children). We set it up at the beginning of Advent and it naturally becomes a part of bedtime stories or quiet time as the kids move the pieces around the room and we talk about the story. We also have a very kid-friendly Little People Nativity Set—perfect for small hands. This is kept in our playroom and has had so much use we actually had to order a new baby Jesus, when the manger went missing for a very long time! Thankfully a new baby Jesus was easily ordered online and is ready for this Advent season.

Celebrating Advent and making space in our family routine to wait expectantly has added depth to how my daughter understands the Christmas story. I want my children to understand the season of Advent as an important part of their Christmas season. For example, I love how my daughter is now familiar with Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love and looks forward to lighting each of these candles. She continues to work

through the meaning of these candles in her own words and it is exciting to see how this changes from year to year. And these simple activities also give me a gentle reminder to slow down and spend more time together as a family, as we wait expectantly for that joy-filled Christmas morning.

Here are some ideas for ways that you and your children or grandchildren can wait expectantly as you celebrate Advent and Christmas:

- *Nativity*: Maybe put away the beautiful glass or intricately-carved nativity for a few years and buy one that can be handled by young children. The Little People nativity is safe for young children (the pieces are large and do not pose a choking hazard) and can survive the play of young children. Simple carved wooden sets, with larger pieces, and even fabric sets are also available at 10,000 Villages. Many specialty baby or children's stores can order sets that are child friendly as well. You can even make one out of paper with older children. Here is a link for a nativity scene that you can print and assemble: http://howaboutorange.blogspot.co.uk/2011/12/print-and-build-nativity-set.html
- *Advent Decorations*: Gather together a basket of craft supplies and gift these to the children in your life. Remind them that each day they get to make a new creation to hang up, either on a tree, a mantel, a bulletin board, or even just a string tied on the wall.
- *Advent Calendars*: Advent calendars are another great way to help children wait. You can make your own by labelling 24 envelopes with the numbers 1–24. In each envelope, place a scripture verse that can be read each day. Along with the scripture verse, include an activity such as 'make cookies for a neighbour', 'shovel a senior's walkway', or 'make a card for a friend'. Vary the activities for the age of the child and their situation. Hang the envelopes on a ribbon using clothespins and open one each day during Advent.

  Alternatively, you can purchase an Advent calendar. The Presbyterian Church in Canada has calendars available. As well, Christian bookstores are a great place to buy calendars with a Christian theme. Some calendars contain a story, some chocolates, and some have stickers. Decide on the one that is right for your family.
- *Random Acts of Kindness*: Advent is a wonderful time to spread kindness and joy. One

youth group I worked with spent the Saturday before Christmas at the nearby shopping centre. They held doors open for people, returned shopping carts, and helped people carry their packages to their cars. Simple acts led to many smiles on a very rushed and busy day.

- *Plan an Advent Afternoon*: On the first Sunday of Advent, plan a special time with your congregation. Enjoy lunch after worship followed by lots of "getting ready" activities. Set up stations for all ages to enjoy and participate in after lunch: send Christmas cards, drawings, and letters to missionaries; make advent wreaths; decorate cookies and deliver them with a church bulletin to folks who cannot easily get to worship; set up an outdoor nativity scene; make a nativity scene; make a Jesse tree; provide simple crafts for young children; or have child friendly nativity sets on hand for children to explore.
- *Nativity Display*: Invite members of the congregation to bring in their favourite nativity sets. Children and adults love to see all of the unique nativity scenes and hear about how they came to be a part of your Christmas tradition. This is a wonderful activity to include as part of an Advent afternoon.

*Celebrating with a Congregation:*

- Worshipping with Children is a blog I use almost weekly. It is filled with ideas on how to thoughtfully include children in your worship service. It is written by Carolyn Brown, a Christian Educator for many years who has a very special gift for providing resources to help you welcome children into worship as full participants. These ideas are not so bad for the grown-ups either! http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.ca/
- Flame's Creative Children's Ministry has simple and creative ideas for hands on-activities with children. These ideas work well for Sunday School, after-school groups, or a special event like an Advent Afternoon. I love that their activities are very artful and include a connection to scripture. http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.ca/

*Kim Webster is the Christian Education Director at Bethel Presbyterian in Scotsburn, NS. She is also a supply teacher, wife, and mother of two.*

# Making Christmas Less Commercial and More Meaningful

by Colleen Wood

THINK ABOUT WAYS TO REDUCE

YS TO MAKE IT MORE MEANINGFUL

Our family just donated several boxes of 'stuff' to our school's garage sale. Some of things we had been hanging on to for a few years, just in case. It felt great to unload, and even better to do so for a cause. But, as I was doing this, I realized that we likely could have gotten rid of at least double this amount and still not missed anything. I also realized that Christmas is coming, and those empty corners will soon be filled, unless we plan to do something about that now.

So, as I think towards Christmas this year, I want to think about way to reduce the stuff of Christmas without decreasing the meaning, or even the fun. If you are thinking the same, considering implementing a few new ideas to your Christmas celebrations:

### Give the gift of time at Christmas

Give children a 'coupon' for a movie, skating trip, tobogganing afternoon, a favourite dinner meal, or a date at a specialty coffee shop. This just might be one of their favourite presents. Some of these events are free, such as tobogganing. Others can be quite in-expensive. For example, a movie night could be a movie night at home. Put some blankets and pillows on the floor, pop some popcorn, and enjoy a great family flick.

*Celebrate Advent*

Advent helps us to slow down and not begin Christmas too early. Use the devotional in this Glad Tidings or an alternative one. Make and use an Advent wreath. Try to not miss a worship service during Advent this year.

*Consider a Christmas tithe*

Think about what you spent last year on Christmas presents. This year, reduce that by 10% or more and donate that money to a charitable organization. Chances are, no one will even notice.

~ pies ~ movies ~ time ~ read ~ poem~ babysitting ~ cookies ~ car wash ~ crackers ~ muf

# Giving Gifts...

Consider limiting the number of gifts to three each, the number the Christ child received from the Magi. If you are currently giving way more presents than this, maybe reduce this number by two every year until you are down to a three gift maximum.

When considering gifts, give: something they want, something they need, something to wear, or something to read.

*Rediscover creative places to shop*

There are many local artisans and products that are perfect for gift giving. Many are made from local or natural products that are friendlier to the earth. For example, how about a jar of local honey or apple butter for a teacher present? Perhaps there is a local jewelry maker that makes just the perfect earrings for your sister. You might pick up the perfect scarf for your husband at a local church bazaar and local markets are filled with interesting gift ideas.

*Stop taking all those blogs, magazine, and talk shows so seriously*

We honestly, do not need to create the 'perfect' Christmas, with the 'perfect' tree, the 'perfect' table, and the 'perfect' Christmas letter. Use what you have to create a meaningful time with family and friends.

### *Toss the flyers*

Yes, I know this sounds counter-intuitive if you are trying to save money this Christmas, but truly, unless you are the most disciplined shopper, flyers make us crave and spend more. Not the opposite. A few years ago I had emails coming into my inbox declaring things such as, lowest price of the year, just for today, and limited time offer, from several of my favourite stores. Because of these emails, sometime I did save money. But sometimes I made a deliberate trip to the store for this great sale, buying things I didn't need. And, I discovered, the next week, there was another great sale. I fully support buying things on sale—if they are things you would buy anyway, but beware of buying just for the deal!

g ~ picture ~ photo ~ wine ~ taxi service ~ popcorn ~ shovelling ~ mulling spice ~ wear

Practical, Inexpensive and Useful Gift Ideas

Give your time: a free car wash, two hours of babysitting, taxi service to the airport, a morning of housecleaning, a month of snow shovelling

Food Items: two home baked pies (when needed), a deli hamper (cheese, nuts, crackers), a movie night basket (popcorn, seasonings, and a DVD or itunes card), a tray of frozen cookies, ready to bake when needed, a wine basket (bottle of wine with mulling spice), homemade muffin mix (with the recipe)

Other ideas: an original poem or song, family photos, meaningful framed picture

Re-gifting: Re-gifting, or even buying second hand can be okay if it something the recipient will love

### *Consider charitable gifts for people*

he Women's Missionary Society has great Together We Can! projects that can e contributed too, and acknowledgement cards are available (see the back over of this magazine for details). The Presbyterian Church in Canada also has whole catalogue of gifts (http://presbyterian.ca/gifts-of-change).

you want to add a little something to your donation, be creative with your resentation. Make a donation to a Presbyterian Camp and include a camp t-shirt r CD of camp songs. Are you giving to a school? Give the recipient a book. If ou are contributing to a group that provides micro-loans, include a fairly traded nocolate bar, or bottle of olive oil from a similar project. Giving to a farming roject? Maybe add a dozen eggs to go with gift!

*Practice good money sense all year both for yourself and with your children*

I strongly believe that children should receive an allowance and that through that they should be taught to save for things they want, save for the future, and give. Adults need to remember that too. If we learn to live within our means all year round, are generous givers, and good savers, that likely won't change when the Christmas trees go up in the stores in September!

*Make sure your Christmas day isn't just about the gifts*

Sometimes we lament the commercialism of Christmas, yet we add to the hype and excitement on Christmas morning. At our house, we open one or two gifts when we first wake up, usually something the kids can play with a little before breakfast. Then, we enjoy a leisurely breakfast together.

After that, we spend time opening presents. Some years the kids have raced through them. Other years, they have wanted to stop to play with gifts before opening others. Maybe even consider a scavenger hunt for the gifts to make finding the gifts as much fun as opening them!

Add more Christmas traditions, to make the presents just part of the day. Christmas can also include reading a favourite Christmas book every year, reading the Christmas narrative from the Bible (or even acting it out), watching a favourite Christmas movie, going for a walk, visiting friends or family, baking special treats, or playing a new game together.

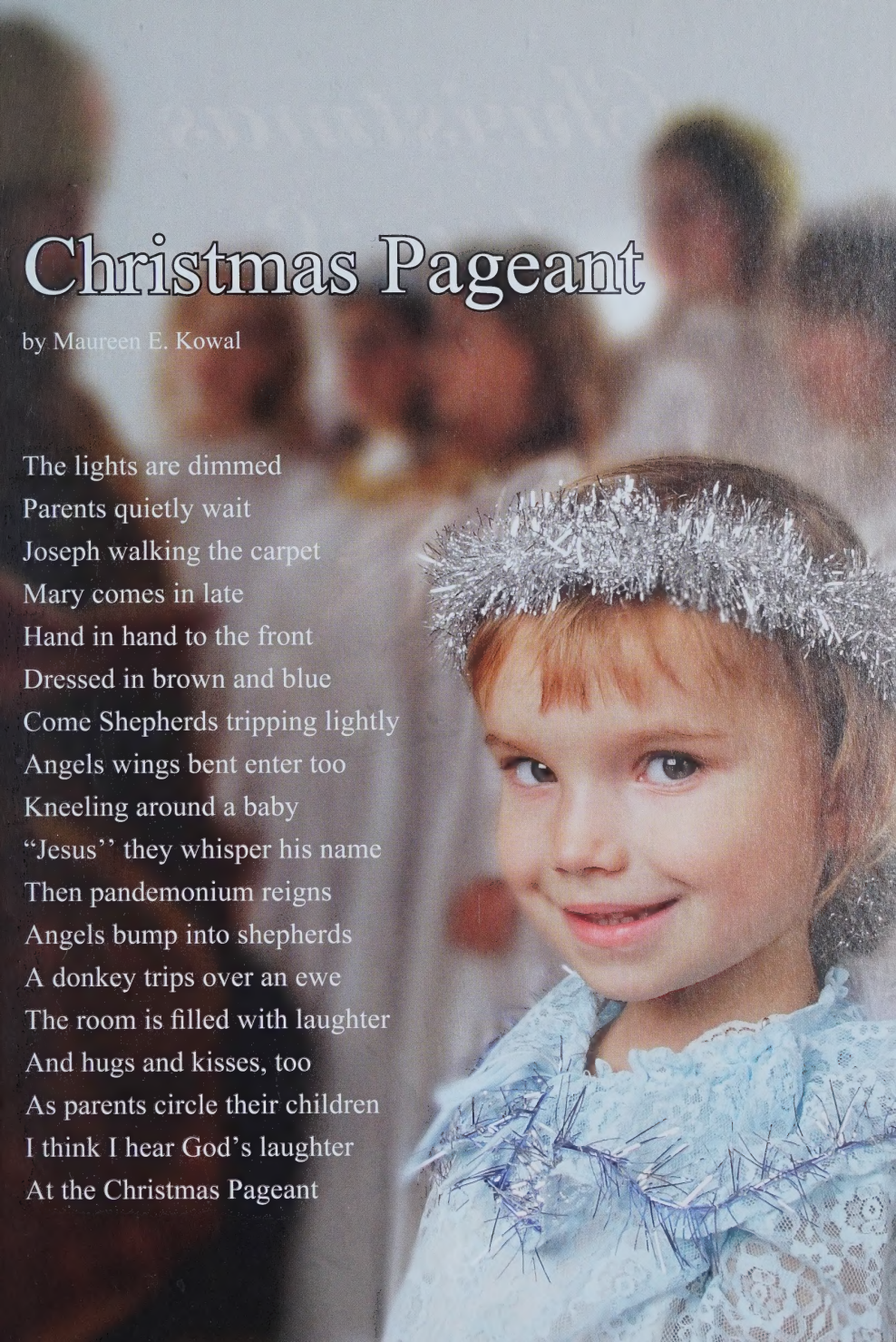
*Be Gentle with Yourself*

This is a process. There is nothing wrong with seeking out that 'must have' gift for a child, a friend, or a colleague. But think about why you are doing it and don't do it just out of expectation. If you absolutely love shopping, as long as you are living within your means, shop. If you love decorating at Christmas, some new decorations are fine, but only if these decorations truly bring you joy. Don't do it, just because your favourite magazine has convinced you that your decorations are dated.

Overall, fill your Christmas with meaningful times with family and friends as you celebrate the true meaning of Christmas—the birth of Christ. Then you just might not be tempted by find meaning in bags from the mall.

# Christmas Pageant

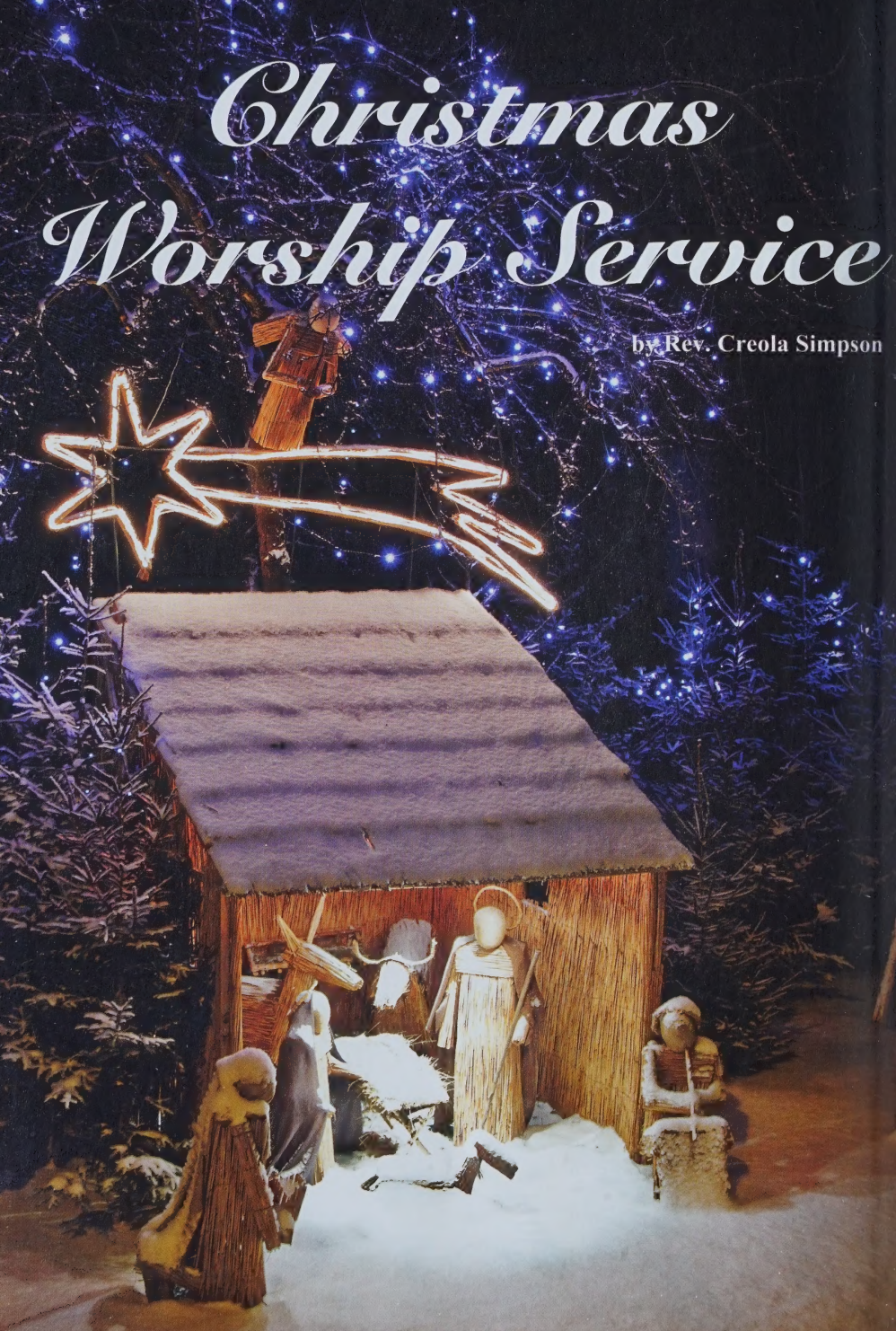
by Maureen E. Kowal



The lights are dimmed
Parents quietly wait
Joseph walking the carpet
Mary comes in late
Hand in hand to the front
Dressed in brown and blue
Come Shepherds tripping lightly
Angels wings bent enter too
Kneeling around a baby
"Jesus'' they whisper his name
Then pandemonium reigns
Angels bump into shepherds
A donkey trips over an ewe
The room is filled with laughter
And hugs and kisses, too
As parents circle their children
I think I hear God's laughter
At the Christmas Pageant

# Christmas Worship Service

by Rev. Creola Simpson



Christmas is a time when we turn our attention to the Holy Family and to our own families. Our memories of being a child at Christmas come readily to mind, in part, because we realize that the Christ Child is very much alive in each one of us.

*Call to Worship* (Responsive)

One: Come to Bethlehem as a member of your own family.
Come as members of your church family.

All: Come to Bethlehem and celebrate the newborn child with Mary and Joseph.

One: Come and celebrate that God's symbol of love is a tiny, helpless baby boy.

All: Come to Bethlehem and sing praises with the shepherds for what God has done.

One: Come to Bethlehem and fall silent in awe and wonder. (Spend a moment in silence.)
Jesus is born, God's Word lives!

All: Praise God! Alleluia, Alleluia!

*Hymn* #143: Infant holy, Infant lowly

*Opening Prayer* (Responsive)

One: Dear God, we come to Bethlehem with Mary and Joseph.

All: We sense their growing excitement at becoming your Holy family in the birth of their first child, baby Jesus.

One: Joseph's and Mary's love for this child begins to well up in our hearts too.

All: Baby Jesus, born for us, born to bring his love into our own families.

One: We believe that salvation has come in a tiny child into the very centre of our own families.

All: We give thanks for the constant love of the Christ Child enfolding each family member throughout every day. Amen.

*Scripture:*: Luke 2: 1–7 (The birth of Jesus)

In those days, a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David, called Bethlehem, because he was descended form the house and family of David.

He went to be registered with Mary to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her

child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (NRSV)

## *Meditation*

Mary invites us to lean in a little closer so we, too, can gaze into the bright eyes of her newborn child.

Suddenly, there is a catch in our breathing as the eyes of God in a tiny baby look back at us.

Mary's protective love is almost too much for her to bear.

Instinctively, Joseph moves in to embrace Mary and baby Jesus in his strong fatherly arms.

Mary and Joseph know deep in their hearts that God is placing his utmost trust in them to be a genuine family for God's only Son. Joseph and Mary are compelled to care for baby Jesus through the sheer depth of God's love thriving within them.

In the intimacy of this small family each one of us now kneels beside, wonder-filled memories of the stories of our own birth into a loving family come clearly to mind. In our own vulnerability at birth, it is the love of God that binds our parents and ourselves together into a family.

As you feel led by God's Spirit, share with others in your group who are in some ways, a family to you, your memories of the stories of your birth that have been told over the generations of your family. (Pause to share this.)

We watch as Mary carefully cradles her infant son. We know that we have been cradled in the arms of our own families, so intensely loved even before the moment of our birth!

Jesus is born into a human family. And now, God's heart fills with love that overflows into our own families in the steady beating of baby Jesus' heart.

God's immense love soon propels us out of the stable and into the lives of not only our own family members, but into the lives of other families God causes us to know and to love and to share in the awesome gift of God's Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.

In the midst of the childlike joy and celebrations that come when we gather with our own families on Christmas Day and during the season of Christmas,

we will know the bountiful and never-ceasing love of God that lives in each one of us through the gift of the Christ Child.

*Offering Invitation*

Let us worship the Christ Child with our offerings in the spirit of celebration and praise.

*Offering Prayer* (Unison)

Embrace with your love, O God, our homes and our families.

May your love reach into the lives of all families through our gifts so that these cherished ones will receive a blessing this Christmas, and in all the days ahead. Amen.

*Closing Prayer* (Unison)

Parent God, may we receive protection and care this Christmas.

May we have the opportunity to offer protection and care to others.

And, may we return to a childlike wonder and above all, may we know that we are being sheltered in our own families by God's tender-hearted love always. Amen.

*Hymn* #149: Away in a manger (As you sing this hymn, remember what it was like to sing this Christmas song, or another, during your own childhood. If time allows, allow participants to share this experience before the Blessing.)

*Commissioning and Blessings* (Responsive)

One: The stable door is slightly open—look in:

All: See the gentle mother with her baby and know peace.
See the proud yet anxious father and feel the responsibility he carries.
See the vulnerable and precious baby and wonder at God's unceasing love. Amen.

# Gifts

by Audrey Cameron

Gifts come in many forms.

Sometimes, it is the whisper of Adam, in the middle of Cecil's funeral: "When you die do you get to go God all by yourself?"

Sometimes, it is a song that voices an unspoken and undeclared prayer.

Sometimes, it is the worship and corporate quiet that touches a noisy soul.

Sometimes, it is the smell of a burning candle that gives pleasure to an office reeking in confusion.

Sometimes, it is the phone call of a colleague needing to share good news or a free resource.

Sometimes, it is the peace of a rainy day that allows one to work in solitude.

Gifts come in many forms.

Nevertheless, where is the gift in a bank account that never has a balance?

Where is the gift in arrows of lies and jealousy?

Where is the gift in shattered dreams, in visionless visions, in half-felt faith?

Where is the gift in the broken heart, the angry spirit, the lifeless Body?

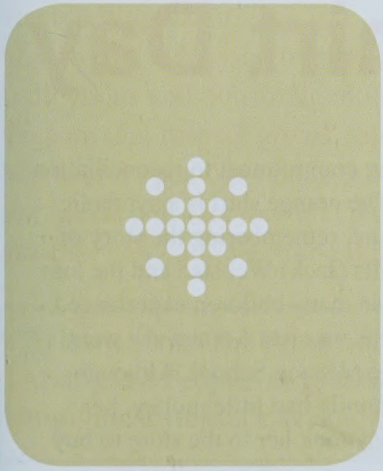
Where is the gift in the branch that thinks it is the Tree?

The gift, I am discovering, is there. The gift is being able to ask the questions. The gift is being able to see what is coming from the Wounded Healer and what is coming from the wounded. The gift is being able to know the pleasures of prince hood in a village where everyone is royalty. The gift is reading the Story, again, for the first time, and being let in on the Author's secrets. The gift is having an autographed copy of the Book written on the lining of my heart. The gift is being given soul mates and playmates that share the same sandbox, read the same picture books, finger paint the same way, and hold the bicycle while I try to balance on two wheels.

Dear Friend, forgive this child who wants all the presents to be toys and joys. Forgive me when I forget to see that everything is a gift that first passes through Your hands.

Dear Friend, forgive this child for forgetting that others around me are delighted with so much less than I, and are so much more grateful!

Make me grateful for the present that is You. Open me to know You are what I have been wanting all along.



But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.

2 Corinthians 4:7–10 (NRSV)

# Orange Shirt Day

The office was a blaze of orange on September 30 as several staff of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Women's Missionary Society were wearing orange shirts in recognition of the harm the residential school system did to the children's sense of self esteem and well-being at the schools. It was also an affirmation of our commitment to reconciliation.

The orange shirt is a symbolic gesture, remembering the story of Phyllis (Jack) Webstad and the loss that so many children experienced. Phyllis was just 6 when she went to the Mission School. Although her family had little money, her granny took her to the store to buy

a new outfit for going to school. She was excited to pick out an orange shirt with eyelet and lace and became excited to go to the school. Unfortunately, this changed as soon as she arrived at the school and she was stripped of the shirt and never got to wear it again. The colour orange still reminds her how she felt—that no one cared for her, and she had no worth.

Residential school survivors experienced a loss of family, culture, language, freedom, self-esteem, worth, and parenting. Beatings, sexual abuse, and neglect plagued many. This small gesture of wearing an orange shirt helps us to honour all those that were affected by the residential schools.

We also remembered the PCC's 20th Anniversary of our Confession to God and Aboriginal Peoples. The confession of 1994 is not just words on paper, but a living promise, and a continually process. As a staff, we continued that journey with a short liturgy, celebrated in multiple languages (English, Korean, and French). We heard the words, "Called to a ministry of reconciliation in Christ, we strive to overcome differences and break down barriers that keep us from living right relationship with God, with each other, and in creation." We were also encouraged to live out the Confession in tangible ways as we continue on this journey towards reconciliation and healing.

We remembered together the last sentence of the Confession, which reads, "With God's guidance our church will seek opportunities to walk with Indigenous peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people." Made in the divine image, we express our love for God most fully when we seek God in every part of our lives and in every person we meet.

**Reconciling Lord,**

Our church is blessed by the friendships that have been made between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. We pray that these friendships deepen, that respect grows, and that compassion flourishes. Soften our hearts and open our minds, Lord. Make us channels of your peace. Let our hands and feet move in ways that do your will. Creator God, we ask that you continue to be with us on this journey. Amen.

To learn about The Presbyterian Church in Canada's work with Aboriginal Peoples or to download a copy of the Confession, visit: http://presbyterian.ca/canadian-ministries/native-ministries/

# Evangel Hall Mission's Social Enterprise Initiative

by Norman Charles

About 25–30% of Evangel Hall's clientele are women, who come from backgrounds of abuse, addiction, abandonment, alienation, emotional and mental health concerns, homelessness, isolation, loss of children and family, powerlessness, prostitution, traumatisation, victimization, and vulnerability.

They have not known what it means to feel "safe," and to live, grow, and work in an environment that is welcoming and supportive rather than hostile and dangerous. Sometimes, through no fault of their own, life has taken a vicious toll and they have ended up homeless and on the street with very limited means of supporting themselves.

Many have survived long enough to find a place like Evangel Hall where they can rest and heal and feel safe, at least for a while. Over a period of time, without intervention, they would have fallen through the cracks and have been lost until they became another statistic and headline: "Homeless woman dies ..."

Our goal is to employ women who have experienced barriers to

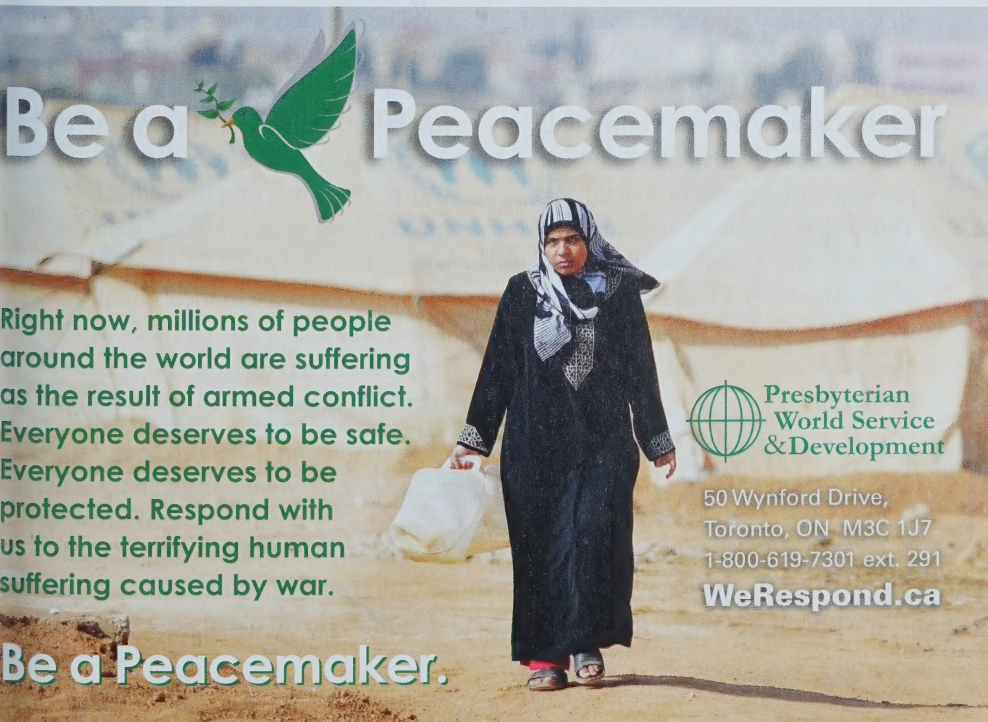
employment due to the circumstances mentioned above. We have begun a social enterprise where women are trained to hand-craft, hand-roll, and hand-dip beeswax candles in a long-term accommodating employment initiative, which will allow them to earn up to, but not over, the amount they are allowed to make while on social assistance.

"This Little Light Candles" operates as the social enterprise initiative of Evangel Hall Mission, an outreach of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and will employ marginalized women to produce 100% beeswax candles.

Some of those candles are available right now. We have beeswax pillars and tapers in various sizes. We have Christmas tapers available, and are currently producing Advent sets of five tapered candles (8" tall by 7/8" wide), including the white Christ candle and the pink joy candle. They are available in either traditional purple or contemporary blue.

You can support this initiative by purchasing these candles. Wouldn't it be wonderful to celebrate the Advent season in your church or home by making a difference in the lives of women in the Evangel Hall community?

*Norman Charles is currently the Program Development & Support Coordinator at Evangel Hall Mission. He is also working part-time on his MDiv at Knox College.*

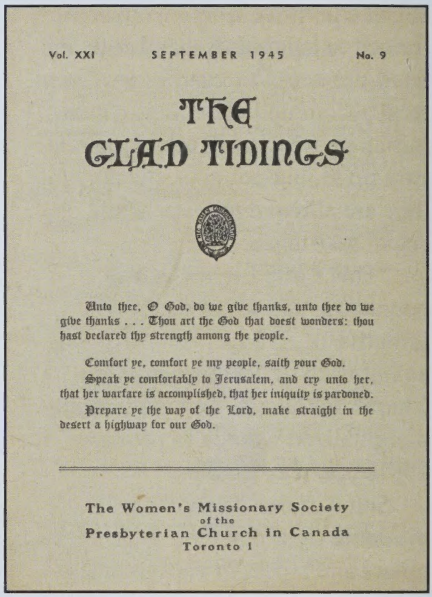


Be a Peacemaker
Right now, millions of people around the world are suffering as the result of armed conflict. Everyone deserves to be safe. Everyone deserves to be protected. Respond with us to the terrifying human suffering caused by war.
Be a Peacemaker.
Presbyterian World Service & Development
50 Wynford Drive,
Toronto, ON M3C 1J7
1-800-619-7301 ext. 291
WeRespond.ca

# The WMS ... Did You Know?

by Colleen Wood

On November 11, many of us will stop to recognize the contribution our Veterans have made. Some of us will attend ceremonies and others will wear poppies, some will share personal stories and others will share family history. In many of our schools, children will also learn about the sacrifice of our Veterans, stop, and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice on behalf of Canada. As Christians, our Remembrance Day will likely include prayers.

We know that the First World War, Second World War, and Korean War did not only affect the lives of the Veterans. It touched the lives of all Canadians—young and old—and all races and social classes. Many Veterans lost their life, or saw the lives of others, friends, being taken.[1] Many were wounded and left with physical impairment or mental scars. Those who remained in Canada were also affected. Some served in factories or as volunteers. Others prayed or waited for news of those serving abroad. Many experienced financial challenges.


Vol. XXI SEPTEMBER 1945 No. 9

THE GLAD TIDINGS

Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks . . . Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

The Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada Toronto 1

The Women's Missionary Society was also involved and affected. The Women's Missionary Society had just been formed in 1914, and three months later, war broke out. The war resulted in a loss of medical missionaries to our mission fields as some answered a call to serve God in medical service to their country. There was also a loss of funds as individuals, auxiliaries, and Mission Bands were tempted to divert money

- During war time, some of the WMS's work in Canada was the care of women and girls who left their homes to engage in war work.
- 1940 was an eventful year in the history of the Formosan Church. All of our missionaries withdrew because of the war crisis.

from the WMS to the Red Cross, Belgian Relief, and Social Reform.[ii] Volunteer also divided or diverted their time to other organizations during World War I. This caused serious financial concern for the WMS, and at their annual council meeting in 1916, Mrs. Steele's presidential address shared that they had a large deficit as of January, but that a recent appeal had been well received and money had come in.[iii]

In 1941, the WMS Young Women's Department stated, "We have been preparing ourselves for a decrease in membership this year due to the movement of young women to centres of war industries and training."

In 1918, the WMS cancelled their annual council meeting because of the war. They felt this would be seen as an unnecessary expense, even though they had ended 1917 with a small surplus. Also, train travel would be more expensive that year because railways were not giving special conference rates in 1918.[iv] Hope began later in 1918, as the war was drawing to a close. The WMS were challenged to look forward. The church asked the WMS to take part in their Forward Movement campaign and the WMS agreed.[v]

After the war, the role of women was dramatically changing not only in Canada, but around the world. Also, the WMS began to thrive.

Once again in 1940, the world faced war. This time, it seemed the WMS was very much involved in helping those both through their own work and the work of the wider Church. Part of that was a call to prayer. The League of Prayer and Service provided this prayer that was printed in every edition of *Glad Tidings* from January 1940 to September 1945:

*O God, the Father of us all, Who has made of one blood all nations of men, mercifully receive the prayers that we offer for our anxious and troubled world. Send Thy light into our darkness and guide the nations as one family into the ways of peace. Take away all prejudice, hatred, and fear. Give grace to all who serve and suffer because of war. Strengthen in us the will to understand one another, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us. To those who by their counsels lead the peoples of the earth grant a right judgement, that so through them and us Thy will be done. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*[vi]

The WMS also contributed money to churches in Middle Europe, Chinese War Relief, and other causes. These givings were above their regular contributions provided for international mission.

Due to the war, some mission

fields (such as Formosa) were negatively affected by the war, but others had new opportunities.[vii] In China, the WMS missionaries worked tirelessly to help reduce human suffering and care for the wounded, and WMS grants were used to provide food for orphans.[viii]

With the war over, the September 1945 issue of *Glad Tidings* began with words from Psalm 77 and Isaiah 40:

> *Unto thee, of God, do we give thanks, unto thee do we give thanks ...Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou has declared thy strength among the people. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

A time of opportunity had come again and the WMS, at their September Council meeting, discussed post-war opportunities. [ix]

After the war, the WMS hired many deaconesses to help build the church across Canada. To help overseas, clothes were collected and sent. Workers were trained using funds from their recently created Peace Thanksgiving Fund. Workers were sent back to Formosa, which had been closed to mission work during the war. The work of the WMS continued and continues to this day. Thanks be to God.[x]

- In 1942, missionaries in India were given an extra $100 in holiday allowance because it was impossible to take their furloughs until the war was over.
- In 1943, because so many women had chosen to serve in the war effort and not as missionaries, a special appeal came to WMS groups: help find young women for mission work!
- In 1944, Council set aside $4000 from general Funds for our War Services account which was used for grants to the Chaplaincy Committee; repairs to war damaged churches in England, Scotland, and Ireland; and to pay the salaries of deaconesses in war service.

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[i] http://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/remembrance/history/a-day-of-remembrance/why

[ii] Klempa, Lois and Rosemary Doran. *Certain Women Amazed Us, The Women Missionary Society Their Story 1864–2002*, Toronto: Women's Missionary Society, 2002, p. 92, 95.

[iii] ibid., p. 96.

[iv] ibid., p. 97.

[v] ibid., p. 99.

[vi] *The Glad Tidings*, January 1940, p.1.

[vii] Klempa, p. 229.

[viii] ibid., p. 240.

[ix] ibid., p. 245.

[x] ibid., p. 248, 249, 266.

***Honor Diaries*** (DVD)
Reviewed by Colleen Wood

I have had the Honor Diaries DVD in my possession since May and will admit to putting off viewing it several times. I knew it would be disturbing. I knew I would be left feeling inadequate to even begin to address the issues it discusses. Finally today, I viewed the movie, and I suggest others do as well.

Honor Diaries is a 2013 documentary that explores violence against women. It features nine courageous female activists discussing several forms of violence facing women primarily in Muslim-majority societies. Each of these women activists is educated, well spoken, and passionate and together they tell the stories of women who cannot tell their own stories. They tell the stories of women and families who have experienced female genital mutilation, honour killings, arranged marriages, and domestic violence at the hands of Muslim men and women. Many of these atrocities have happened in Muslim-majority countries, but some have happened in countries like the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the Netherlands, and even in Canada.

There were a few things that I found very positive in this film. Some of the advocates were faithful Muslims. This documentary is not meant to be an attack on the Muslim religion, though parts of it, taken out of context, could definitely be used for that. This is about women. This documentary is about helping women that are being abused. It is about standing up for those women who, because of where they were born, may be married before the age of 10, may experience or die from female circumcision, or may be exposed to repeated domestic violence. Some may be murdered and others may commit suicide for so called 'honour'.

This film will disturb you. This film will engage you. This film will inform you. Yet, it should be watched. As one of the women, a Canadian, Raheel Raza says, "I feel that the reason the statistics are so high for forced marriage, FGM and violence is because we do not speak about them—these issues have been around for a long time but they've always been off limits to talk about. If there isn't awareness, we cannot begin to work towards a solution." So be part of the solution.

This documentary is available in a few ways: by purchasing the DVD from www.honordiaries.com, through your subscription to Netflix, or it can be purchased and downloaded from itunes.

# Can you find Hugh Turner?

The members of North Caradoc-St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Strathroy, Ontario would like your help in identifying Hugh Turner in this group photo from the early 1900s. This is the only photograph they have of the man whose bequest to the church has had such an enduring impact on the congregation's life and ministry. The only problem is they don't know which one he is! In 1943, Mr. Turner left two shares of Huron and Erie Savings and Loan Society, valued at $200, to North Caradoc Church through his estate as an endowed gift for the church. Seventy years and several mergers and stock splits later, Hugh Turner's gift of $200 has grown to be worth over $160,000! The income generated from the investment has provided funding for building projects at the church and enabled the congregation to hire a part-time staff person to expand their ministry with children and youth. The people of North Caradoc-St. Andrew's may not be able to identify Hugh Turner in this old photo, but they can certainly identify the signs of his continued presence among them through the endowment fund established through his bequest.

To learn how you can make a lasting difference through a gift of stock, a bequest in a will or some other planned gift, contact:

The Planned Giving Office
The Presbyterian Church in Canada
50 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON
1-800-619-7301
plannedgiving@presbyterian.ca
or go to www.presbyterian.ca/provisionaries

**Planting seeds of hope.**
**For generations to come.**

**Todd Statham and Annika Voeltz**
**Malawi**

"A pastor needs to read," said one of my students recently, "but we don't have anything *to* read."

True enough. When students in the past left Zomba Theological College after their studies to take up congregations in the various synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian [CCAP], they left campus with little in hand except what they had learned in the classroom. No Bible dictionary or theology books to deepen their teaching and preaching, and no resources to sharpen sermons or improve pastoral counselling. Most began their ministry in congregations in rural Malawi, where electricity lines don't run, so computer programs and the Internet were not even available to them. Once I asked a few students, out of curiousity, how much money they would earn in their first years in ministry. Their answers shocked me: around 50,000 kwacha per month on average, which is about $110 Canadian dollars. So, we certainly cannot blame them for using their kwacha to fill their families' bellies rather than their bookshelves!

One of the most pressing needs in the rapidly-growing churches on the African continent is church leaders, who combine thoughtful, faithful, and relevant preaching, with leadership integrity and compassionate shepherding. All this can be hard to do when pastors lack ministry resources to inspire, challenge, and guide them—if they can't read (because of a lack of resources), as my student put it bluntly.

That is why the Presbyterian Church in Canada's "New Minister's Library" project is essential. This project, which is administered by International Ministries, provides students graduating to ministry in the PCC's partner churches in the majority world with a small 'start up' library of high quality resource books. This year's crop of CCAP graduates (21 in all) received a Bible dictionary, preaching and pastoral counselling handbooks, and textbooks on interpreting the Bible, theology, and ethics from the African perspective. Clement Macherero, one of the students from Nkhoma Synod in the central region of Malawi, expressed his gratitude to Canadian Presbyterians for funding the New Minister's Library Fund. "I wouldn't be able to ever afford these books," he explained. Another graduating student, Mara Betenengo, is the first woman to study for ministry from her CCAP synod in Zimbabwe. She related to me how difficult it is for a woman in a male-dominated church and culture to be taken seriously

as a pastor, "But I feel like these resource books will add weight to my preaching and teaching," she said.

The New Minister's Library provides 'food for thought' for pastors and churches hungry for resources to understand God's word and his world. This ministry can be supported through the PCC's gifts of change catalogue.

*Todd Statham taught at Zomba Theological College until June 2014. He has now completed his assignment in Malawi.*

## International Guests at Canada Youth

Several young people from our partner churches visited Canada this summer, and attended Canada Youth 2014. Here are just a few of their thoughts.

Photo: Courtesy Camp Geddie

**Rii Taljimaraw, Taiwan**
**A Jump of Faith**

When Jesus called people to go to the world and share the gospel, the people went out of their safety zone, bravely. I think that's called the jump of faith. This trip is totally a challenge for me.

In the past, I had a few chances to visit different countries, most of which were in Asia. The thought of visiting Canada was like a dream! Now, I am here, by God's grace.

We spent 16 hours flying, and had some trouble when we arrived. But thank God, after I took a whole night to sleep and relax, the worry and fear were gone. Open your heart and eyes and God will guide you.

On this trip, there are some things catching my eye. The first is the sun. The sun sets so late! The situation in Canada breaks the logic about working when the sun rises and resting when the sun rests. The second is the trees. We can see so many

trees here, even in the residential areas.

The third is "Wow! The water is safe to drink from the bathroom tap!" Incredible!

After I came here, I realized that Presbyterian churches in Canada face the same problems as we do in Taiwan—aging population, people moving away, and the church having less influence. But the church is a crowd of people who are called by God so we won't lose our faith even though we have those problems.

When we visited Knox Presbyterian Church in Baddeck, Rev. Brian told me that he hopes to serve there his whole life. That touched my heart, because that shows strong courage.

We are still moving on to learn, to see, and to experience. I hope that everything we learn will be a blessing to one another. May God lead me...

## Overseas Staff Birthdays

**December**

15 – Rick Allen, Kenya
29 – Rachel Julianna Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary
31 – Sheila McKelvie, Pakistan

**January**

5 – Aron Csaba Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary
18 – Anna Szabo (Pandy-Szekeres), Hungary
29 – David Pandy-Szekeres, Hungary

**Agnes Garanyi, Ukraine**
**The Best Visit Ever!**

My name is Agnes and I am from Ukraine. Thanks to The Presbyterian Church I am spending three weeks here in Canada.

Already I cannot count how many interesting places we have visited during our visit. I have learned a lot about people and cultures.

We are an international group with people from different countries and communities. But that is okay. We all have our own viewpoints, norms, and traditions. There are some things we believe that are accepted and normal at home, but others may find them weird or unacceptable. The most important thing that I have learned is that even though something is different, it is not naturally bad. It may just not be what you are used to.

I believe this experience will shape my life and open my eyes to see what colourful creatures we are and will help me to accept others as they are.

**Jenny Li, Taiwan**
**Thanks God! Thanks PCT (Presbyterian Church in Taiwan)! Thanks PCC (Presbyterian Church in Canada)!**

I feel so lucky and I am thankful that God brought me to Canada. While in Canada, I am learning many things I haven't done in Taiwan. I have seen many beautiful views. I can do many new things. I can try!

I know I'm shy, but I'll try more things. I open my heart to let Jesus come in. I have many new friends, and I am happy to make friends with people from other countries. They are all friendly and very kind. I like everyone I have encountered. Everyone has a cheerful heart. Me too.

I like to sing for God. When everybody sings together, it is so touching and makes me want to cry. I'm so glad.

I have many feelings during the trip. I feel so touched when I go to church, and when I meet many people. I'm so excited to go to Canada Youth 2014! I want to be challenged by new things I haven't done before. I believe my view will be more open. My heart too. I want to be more brave and crazy.

In Canada, I'm happy every day. I feel happiness. I also want to thank Matt and Heather. More important is thanks to God!

Thanks God! Thanks PCT! Thanks PCC!

**Virginia Medina, Nicaragua**
**Once in a lifetime opportunity**

It's been a week since we arrived in Canada, leaving our families,

friends and our comfort zones behind. I can't believe we've been here for a week because it feels like a month.

We are so close now, it's impossible that we've only known each other for a week. We are like family now. In this short period of time I already love and care about each and every one of the group. I also admire all the work that Matt and Heather are doing just for us, so we can feel at home here. They care about us so much and they have a lot of patience.

The experiences with the churches and congregations are so wonderful because of all the similarities that they have with the churches back home.

I think I speak for all the group when I say that we are excited about Canada Youth next week, and about the next week that we still have here in Canada.

I feel very grateful to be here and I thank God for this once-in-a-life opportunity.

**Joseph Duwa, Malawi**
**Home Away from Home**

When someone has travelled away from home, he or she has a lot of questions in mind. One of the questions is: "What kind of people am I going to meet?" But since I came to Nova Scotia, I've been happy because I have found friendly people at each and every place I've visited, and this has made me feel at home always.

Although I am away from my home country, Malawi, I don't feel lost because of the friendly people I have found in this beautiful country.

Another touching experience is the love that I've seen in Presbyterian churches among the members. For example, after the church services the members could go to the kitchen and have a cup of tea together. This promotes the relationship among the members.

I just thank God for this wonderful time I am having in Canada!

Photo: James Pan, Taiwan

# In the Society

## Synodical

On June 21, the Synodical of **Alberta and the Northwest** hosted a first ever Presbyterian Gathering at Varsity Acres. The Rev. Helen Smith, our speaker, spoke on the theme Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World. We heard that we need to learn about our neighbours' religions, understand them, and care for them as we do our own Christian community. This ability to share and learn from each other can be beneficial for everyone. The Golden Rule, "do unto others as you would have done unto you" is practically the same in eleven different faiths and so the questions is, "how do we apply that rule?

Eighty people enjoyed this time of learning and sharing and we are committed to making this an annual gathering where people of all ages from across the province can come together to focus on mission.

On April 12, the Synodical of **Quebec & Eastern Ontario** held their Annual Meeting at St. Columba by the Lake Presbyterian Church, Pointe Claire PQ with the theme, Past, Present, Future. The Rev. Ian Smith, minister, welcomed everyone and President Joan Hilliard constituted the meeting with prayer. Irene Nesbitt led the Worship about gifts we have and how we can make a difference in our world and community.

Mary Moorhead, Catherine Blatch, and Howie Dearlove gave the reports. Then Christine Ball introduced Janet Ham who, with her husband, is the new director at Gracefield Camp. They are going to begin a Gran Camp where grandparents and grandchildren can attend camp together.

Then Anita Mack and Genevieve Holding showed us the banner that was made for the WMS 100th anniversary. The Rev. Barry Mack then spoke about women in mission in Quebec. In 1864, a ladies Auxiliary Association of the PCC was formed, thus there will be a 150th anniversary event this year. He told us about Jane Redpath, who gave money to help build Presbyterian College, and Catherine Ewart, a very influential figure in Toronto mission work.

After lunch, the Rev. Ian Smith gave a history of the church and shared some of its outreach projects. Brockville Presbytery led the In Memoriam and a silk rose was placed in a bough of evergreens for each name read.

Lanark and Renfrew Presbyterial led the Season of Prayer with prayers

for local, national, and international problems. Druse Bryan, our afternoon speaker, spoke of her trip to Jobat India to attend the opening of the Jobat Hostel, which was a WMS Together We Can! project. The group also attended a reception at the graduate school of nursing in Indore and visited the rural hospital in Hatpiplia to learn about the community health programs. In Jobat, they also went to Masihi High School where the girls sit on one side and the boys on the other. There are three computers in the school.

Christine Ball installed the executive members and we closed the meeting with singing, Called as Partners in Christ's Service, and a prayer by Irene Nesbitt.

-Vivian Young

## Presbyterial

**Brockville** Presbyterial met on August 11 for a Summer Meet and Greet at St Andrew's and St. James Presbyterian Church in Cardinal. We welcomed Sam and Linda Ling home on furlough from Central Asia where they have served for 11 years. Janet Jones opened the meeting with prayer, and Margaret Reynolds and Janet Wood led worship on the theme, Burst Forth in Hope, based on Psalm 42.

Sam and Linda Ling gave a comprehensive presentation through words and pictures of their life in Asia. Funded partly by Presbyterians Sharing, Sam works as a computer consultant and Linda leads special education groups at Hope Academy. Linda also paid regular visits to the orphanages to give hope to the children there.

They also informed us of the area where they work which is 90% mountainous. The people live in tent-like yurts, wages are low, and corruption is present at all levels. They ask for our prayers that God's word will be planted in the hearts of the people there.

## Local

On June 8, St. Andrew's, Mooretown ON, celebrated the 100th Anniversary of their WMS by presenting a special church service developed by their minister, the Rev. Margaret Bell.

Several WMS members, former and current, and associate members were present.

WMS memorabilia, as well as a sleeping mat crocheted with 250 milk bags, was displayed.

- Marilyn Shaw

Kenyon WMS welcomed Sam and Linda Ling as guest speakers in August and learned of their work in Central Asia. Over 35 people attended the meeting.

# In Memoriam

Helen Nina Alexandra Sinclair died on June 12, 2014, at The Avalon, Orangeville, in her 91st year. She was the beloved wife of 65 years of the Rev. Donald R. Sinclair. She was predeceased by her daughter Christine Louise (1953-1973). Dearest mother of Donald (Janet) of Orangeville, Robert (Kathleen) of Kenya, Blair (Louise) of Toronto, Scott (Anne) of Ottawa, Ellen (Rod Ryner) of Timmins, and Peter (Carol Galioto) of Milton. A fantastic Nana to Eryn (Andrew), Andrew (Liza), Ethan (Sapna), Quentin (Michelle), Christine (Richard), Jonathan (Bryony), Alexander (Jessica), Ian, Laura, David, Christine Ryner, Joshua and Alanna, and Great-grandmother of Nina, Beth, Maeve, Grayden, Kai, Luke and one more expected soon in Ottawa. A cherished sister-in-law, aunt, cousin and friend of many, she will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

Helen graduated from the University of Toronto in 1944 and then trained at Ewart College to become a Deaconess of The Presbyterian Church in Canada. She devoted the next few years to the service of God and the church working for the WMS in Western Canada. She met and married the Rev. Donald Sinclair in 1948, and together they shared ministry in the congregations and communities of Exeter, Hensall, Dundalk, Maple Valley, Ventry, Oshawa, Rockwood, Eden Mills, Carluke, and Binbrook.

Helen also worked for ten years as the Volunteer Coordinator at Homewood, Guelph, and served as chair of the Ontario Mental Health Association. After the death of her daughter, she and Don spent many years volunteering with Bereaved Families of Ontario. Helen was a founding member of the 'Grand Ladies of Crieff', a group that met annually for 25 years for fellowship and renewal.

Helen had a special gift for hospitality and generations of children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, neighbours and friends share precious memories of days spent at the Farm at Scott's Falls, the hub of her family life.

# Remembering

Helen Armstrong,
Sarah Dunning
Auxiliary, Knox,
Dundas ON

Elisabeth Sutherland
St. Andrews WMS,
Barrie ON

Barbara Tubb
Friendship Auxiliary,
St. Mary's ON

Corry Eygenraam
Glenys Puffer
Virginal Wilkes
Ruby Walker WMS,
Huntsville ON

Shirley Brown
St. Andrew's WMS,
Kitchener ON

Jessie Paterson Birrell
St.Andrew's,
Kamloops BC
(Formerly of Edmonton)

## What are you Reading? What is great about the book you have just finished?

We know, even with the closure of The Book Room, that many of you will continue your reading obsession. So, we need your help.

What are you reading? What is great about the book that you have just finished? What has it taught you? Who would you suggest should read this book (i.e.a young mom, a retired person, a person who loves to cook, or travel, or write)?

If you can answer these questions, you can write a book review. We want those book reviews for *Glad Tidings*. Share your passion. Help nurture the faith and minds of others. Book reviews can be emailed to Colleen Wood at Gladtidings@presbtyerian.ca or mailed to *Glad Tidings*, 50 Wynford Drive, Toronto ON M3C 1J7.

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*800-619-7301*
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